

THE GUILD OF THE GARDEN LOVERS



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THE GUILD OF THE GARDEN LOVERS

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THE
GARDEN ANTHOLOGY

By ROSE GARDNER.

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WHITE CLEMATIS ARCH

From a painting by Mrs. Molony (May Higginson)

THE GUILD OF THE GARDEN LOVERS

By
CONSTANCE O'BRIEN

I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom,
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.
—TENNYSON, *Amphion*.

WITH A COLOURED FRONTISPIECE AND SIXTEEN PLATES



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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is not to be considered as competing in any way with the many excellent manuals and other books on garden work, which are so plentiful in these days ; at the most, it can only be used as a supplement to them. For though a Garden Lover and a skilled gardener (whether amateur or professional matters not) are often one and the same, it is not always so by any means, and there is a large and increasing class of people who love their gardens and do their best for them, but yet have many puzzles and difficulties, perhaps pleasures also, which to the skilled gardener are absolutely non-existent. His knowledge has become so much part of himself that, unless he is one of the rare people whose sympathy never fails, it is extremely hard for him even to begin to understand wherein lie the difficulties of those who are stumbling on the path of garden knowledge and experience. He thinks it almost childish to be puzzled by such elementary problems, and quite childish to be pleased with such very small successes, where a fellow-stumbler

can often perceive the particular small obstacle of the moment, and can sometimes help to clear it away.

Nowadays, too, people begin to speak as if a "gardener" were merely a cultivator of certain classes of plants ; but a collection of plants does not make a garden, however well they may be grown, and the Garden Lover is a good deal besides being a cultivator. He loves the garden as a whole, and the cultivation of the plants is not an end in itself, but only one, if the principal one, of the means of making the garden beautiful and delightful. While he welcomes any instruction or information that he can get on the matter, he does not despise the suggestions which come to him from seeing other people's gardens, or from reading about them, such suggestions being often especially helpful because they are turned over and over in his mind, and become in a manner his own. As what is said in this book is founded on actual happenings in a variety of actual gardens, it is hoped that while it cannot pretend to instruct, it may suggest some ideas which Garden Lovers in widely differing gardens may be able to turn to their own uses, and so to increase their garden pleasure.

TO THEIR SERVICE IT IS DEDICATED.

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THE GUILD OF THE GARDEN LOVERS

PROLOGUE

THE BIRTH OF THE GUILD

FOUR friends had met in the dainty tea-room of the Arbour Club. The fair, tall hostess Rosemary, a little older than the rest, was busy over the tea-table, while the rest chatted. Presently Heather remarked, "This meeting was a most excellent idea of yours, Rosemary. We don't often get a chance to see each other, and really one can't talk garden properly by letter. Mercy on us, Violet, what's the matter?" For Violet had emitted a heart-rending groan.

"*Temper!*" responded the stately, handsome Violet. "Speak not to me of garden talk; my last remains of temper have been ruined by it!"

"Yes, we all know Violet's temper, don't we?" put in Daisy softly; and the friends laughed, for Violet's nature was as sweet as her face was beautiful.

“ Well, pour out your woes, poor martyr,” said Rosemary ; “ who has been persecuting you ? ”

Heather looked up quickly. “ Wait a second, I’ve a notion. Violet, haven’t you been staying at Starlands lately ? ”

“ Hence these tears ! ” answered Violet in tones of tragedy.

“ Where’s the connexion ? ” inquired Rosemary. “ It used to be a pleasant house enough, as I remember.”

“ Quite true, in the old lady’s time,” said Violet ; “ the trouble now is that Maud, whom I’ve known ever since she wore pigtails, has lately fixed her heart on being absolutely in the fashion about everything, and has picked up a set of friends who are each trying to go one better than the other in that direction, so you can fancy the results.”

Heather nodded. “ I saw something of it when I was last there, but I expect it has got worse, and fashion in the garden is always pretty bad.”

“ It *is*,” said Violet emphatically. “ They talked and talked about masses of colour, and broad effects, and schemes of harmony, and this, and that, and the other, and not one of them cared more for the lovely things they were profaning, than for a thread of coloured crewel ! To hear of the worst of bedding-out would have been peace to it, for at all events, those people didn’t make believe to care

particularly, and were not always giving themselves airs as if they were doing something fine and superior. How I do hate superior people ! ”

“ Poor dear, you have had a bad time,” said Daisy in soothing tones. “ They must have been very aggressive ? ”

“ Oh, rampant to the last degree, and of course all talking Latin names. Now I don’t mind real botanists, or even people who are constantly reading plant catalogues using Latin names,”——

“ They don’t, mostly,” interjected Heather.

“ Perhaps not, and I could forgive them if they did, because they have to be familiar with them, but when a woman who barely knows a hollyhock from a buttercup pretends to have forgotten her mother tongue, why, I could shake her.”

“ Are you quite sure that you didn’t ? ” asked Rosemary.

“ No, I refrained, though it was a temptation. There was a creature who bored me to extinction one day, till at last, when she asked me ‘ if I had a good strain of a-qui-le-gias ? ’ I just had to say, ‘ Haven’t they got an English name, for I’m no good at Latin ? ’ ”

Rosemary began to laugh. “ Oh, Violet, you naughty girl,” she said, “ did you expect her to believe you ? ”

“ She might please herself about that,” Violet

answered coolly. " Besides, it was quite true, I'm *not* good at Latin. So she only grinned and looked superior, and said ' that English names were really very quaint and nice, but as none of the gardeners knew them, it was so difficult to keep them up.' Whereupon, I remarked that if I had a gardener as ignorant as all that, I wouldn't trust him to sift manure. That shocked her and she went away."

" Well, that was a degree better than shaking her," Rosemary said indulgently. " Tea is ready now ; will you come, dears ? "

" It is so refreshing to hear you say ' dears ' once more, Rosemary," Violet observed as she moved to the tea-table ; " it makes me feel in a sane and reasonable world again."

Rosemary smiled. " It is very good of you not to mind my oldmaidishness," she said.

" Now that's fishing for compliments," Heather broke in ; " you never were oldmaidish, and never would be, if you lived to be a hundred and three, like the elder sister in ' Bow down ! ' "

" Heaven forbid ! " ejaculated Rosemary piously. " Try this cake, children, and don't be foolish."

Heather accepted the cake, and resumed : " I was just going to say, when we digressed, that though I sympathize entirely with Violet's annoyances, my own pet grievances lie in another direction,

It isn't so much what people say, as what they write in books and papers, which teases me just now."

"But why, Heather?" asked the hostess. "I'm not sure that I know what you mean, as there are certainly some very delightful gardening books to be had."

"No doubt there are, and most useful ones too," Heather replied. "I think I like the older ones best perhaps, but some I've come across lately make me feel impelled to say all the time, like the old lady in *David Copperfield*, 'Let us have no meandering.'"

"You would have to say it very loud and clear indeed," said Violet, "before you got it attended to. People have got an idea that to make a book you have only to start in a garden, and then meander round the universe, and there you are! And all the reviewers will praise you up to the skies."

"Rather like the moral to 'Gladys,' said Daisy," "don't you remember?"

"We have observed, moreover, that young men
Are fond of good advice, and so are girls;
Especially of that meandering kind,
Which winding on so sweetly, treats of all
They ought to be and do and think and wear,
As one may say, from creeds to comforters.
Indeed, we much prefer that sort ourselves,
So soothing."

“ I don’t myself,” she added. “ Perhaps it’s another kind of fashion.”

“ Perhaps it is,” said Rosemary, meditatively stirring her tea. “ But I think, too, that some of the writers who are not thinking of fashion, yet get wrong for want of any clear idea of what they mean to do. Now Miss Jekyll, for instance, tells one ways of having a beautiful garden, and dear E. V. B. helps one to enjoy it, and other people do a little of both these things, but they don’t sit down and write the first thing which comes into their heads.”

“ Well,” said Heather, “ I wouldn’t really mind so much what they did, if they only would not be sentimental about it. I can *not* stand my garden being sentimentalized over ” ; and Heather’s frank and pleasant face took an expression of stern determination.

“ It makes one feel like a fool to have one’s pet things pawed over,” said Violet ; “ the papers are not quite so bad about that, are they ? ”

“ Not as far as I know,” answered Heather, “ but I don’t see many. I picked up one the other day though, which fairly shocked me, in another way. It wasn’t one of the best, of course—*The Garden for the Million*, or some such name—still some of the advice wasn’t bad, and it seems to have a considerable following. There was a photographic competition, which is nothing unusual in these

papers, and one competitor proudly sent in a photograph of rocks and bushes scene-painted on the dead wall of his back yard ! ”

“ Not really ! ” Rosemary gasped.

“ Didn’t the editor tell him that he ought to be ashamed of himself ? ” asked Violet.

“ Not at all,” answered Heather ; “ he gave the wretch a prize, and printed his elaborate description of how he perpetrated the enormity. Yes, I know it’s funny,” she went on, as the others laughed, “ but when one was hoping that people were getting to have some better notions of taste and refinement, to have such a vulgar sham held up for admiration is a bit depressing.”

“ I know you must feel it so, dear Heather,” gently said Rosemary, who knew, better than the rest, how hard Heather had worked to improve the surroundings of her poorer neighbours.

“ But I don’t pretend to speak of the garden papers generally,” Heather resumed. “ You see a good many of them, don’t you, Daisy ? ”

“ I don’t take more than one or two at the outside,” Daisy explained, “ but I often get one to read in the train, and as I’ve had a good many short journeys this year, I have seen a variety, and, to do them justice, there is generally something interesting in them. But I’ll tell you what does annoy me very much in them, the tone they nearly all take

when they talk about the choice of plants and their arrangement in the garden, the same words come over and over again—‘*showy*,’ ‘a fine *show*,’ ‘a *striking display*,’ ‘a gorgeous *effect*’—till one wonders for whose benefit it is all to be done? Not for the owner’s evidently, nobody sets to and makes effects on himself.”

Gentle little Daisy was quite pink with indignation.

“That’s perfectly true, Daisy,” Rosemary said eagerly. “This talk about *show* in the garden is getting quite intolerable. They don’t exactly mean it half the time, but it is really a misuse of words to assume that calling a thing *showy* is any recommendation. Nobody, even with the worst taste, would like to be told that she had a showy gown on, or showy furniture in her drawing-room, and I do think that the things which are not made by human hands should not be belied in this way.”

“Unluckily so many of the writers in these papers haven’t the dimmest idea of the right use of words, however clever they may be in other ways,” observed Heather. “There is one specialist who always says ‘prolific’ when he means ‘numerous,’ and the effect is very funny.”

“Still,” said Daisy, “they might know that the words they use are libels on beautiful plants, and even so they are not consistent. All strong colour

is 'showy' with them, and yet they apply the very same word to the most delicate flowers. I've seen it used about the St. Bernard's lilies—the anthericums, you know."

"Why, my dear Daisy," exclaimed Heather, "they are the perfection of dainty refinement, a poet might dream of them. Showy, indeed! what next?"

"I'm afraid it means that a good many people do have gardens only to show, somehow or other," Violet remarked; "it's fashion again in a different shape, I suppose."

"No doubt there is that in it," Rosemary said, "but the reasons why one gardens would take us into a biggish subject, I fancy."

"Well, then, here's a smaller one," said Daisy, "which also comes out of the papers, the questions and answers part. Did it ever strike you that even in the good papers the answers are often unsatisfactory?"

"How do you mean, Daisy?" Heather asked. "I've often got very good hints from them."

"Oh, so have I," Daisy answered, "but sometimes it seems as if the editor only half answered the question, that might be just a slip, perhaps, and sometimes as if he were answering something in his own mind, not what was asked."

"Perhaps that was because the question was badly

put. They do make a hash of their questions sometimes," Rosemary reminded her.

"And they ask uncommonly queer ones moreover," said Violet. "Don't you remember that unrivalled man who had heard that fish manure was a good thing, and wanted to put a stale whiting round each of his rose trees!"

"Oh, *Violet!*" ejaculated the laughing Daisy and Heather simultaneously, "you must have made that up."

"No, she didn't," said Rosemary promptly. "I've got it in a bound volume of the paper at home. But the editor had no difficulty in understanding that question, Violet; he lost his patience for once, and told the man not to be crazy, or words to that effect, so that does not touch Daisy's point."

"Well," said Daisy, "but putting aside misunderstandings and stupid questions, it does often seem to me that, though the advice is given carefully, I might find it very difficult to carry it out, supposing it were my own case, unless I had a good deal of knowledge to guide me. For instance, I often see this: 'Plant out in a shady, moist spot in a spare corner for the summer,' but my shady spots are uncommonly dry, as whatever shades them keeps off the rain."

"More by token," added Violet, "you don't *have* spare corners in a small garden, they're all full, but

it seems to be assumed that everybody has unlimited corners to play with."

"I have noticed that inclination to deal with things only on the large scale," Rosemary said, "but mostly, I think, in the articles more than the answers."

"Now you mention it," said Heather, "I remember an instance of that very thing, in an article about window boxes. It was an excellent article as far as the advice about the plants went, but it would have been useless to many people, because the good man who wrote it had never noticed the change which has come into the shape of windows in these days; he wrote his article entirely for the big sash window with the wide sill, the regulation London window of fifty years ago, but how few of the new houses have them now."

"Thank you, Heather; that illustrates my point very well," Daisy said. "It's not the editor's fault, but there must often be something which he can't, or at any rate, doesn't know, which prevents his advice from working out properly."

"There's another thing, too," said Heather, slowly breaking an almond into little bits, a trick of hers when she was thinking, "so often in gardening there is something one has to be shown or told once" ("Just like making out a cheque," interposed Violet) "and then one knows, and seems always to have

known ; but if one is not told, there is a hopeless muddle. Now professional people know these things too well to think of telling them to anybody."

"That's true," Violet said. "I should like to see the professional who would have had the sense to tell me, as you did, Heather, how to know a spawning snail when I saw it."

"And did that matter much?" Heather asked with a smile.

"It mattered considerably to a large number of snails, whose career of crime was nipped in the bud in consequence," Violet responded dramatically.

"That's a pretty good 'derangement,' Mrs. Malaprop," said Daisy, enjoying it all the same.

"*They* were deranged, I can tell you," retorted Violet. "What is it, Rosemary? You look as if you were considering something."

Rosemary looked up. "I was just wondering," she said, "whether we, and other people like us, who have a certain power of helping each other in this matter, could not find some way of doing so more effectually."

"But how could it be done?" asked Daisy, eager and keen at once. "I am sure we should like it if we saw the way."

"This is very interesting," said Violet, "'d velope,' Rosemary, as the Great Owl says, though we are neither conspirators nor 'Nocturnes.'"

“Far from it,” said Rosemary. “Well, we all seem to feel that exchanging our private experiences in the garden, is often a useful supplement to even the best professional advice, partly because we know the conditions under which we each work better than any stranger can do, and partly because we have much about the same ideas and objects in the business. I mean, none of us garden for fashion’s sake,” smiling at Violet, “nor want to make a fetish of it, but we do it because we like it, and get a great deal of interest and pleasure out of it.”

“A good many other people get pleasure out of *your* garden, dear Rosemary,” said Heather softly.

Rosemary flushed a little at this interruption. “That is part of the enjoyment,” she said, “and neither here nor there, anyhow. What I want to come at is some way of making these exchanges, and generally comparing notes in a tolerably regular fashion, so as to be really useful.”

“Let us make a Society,” quoth Violet; “nothing gets on which isn’t a Society, or a League, or a Guild, these times. What shall we call it? The League of the Unpretending Gardeners?”

“No,” said Heather emphatically, “I’m not proud, Violet; but I couldn’t, I really could not say to any one who wanted to join us, Will you be an Unpretending Gardener?”

Violet laughed. “I’m not tied to the name,”

she said, "if you can find one which expresses us better."

"Don't you think," Daisy began, hesitating a little, "wasn't the idea to take in more than just our actual work, but our feeling about it, I can't quite express it, I mean the sort of sympathy we should have with everybody who cared for their gardens as we do?"

"I think Daisy has got the right idea there," Rosemary said thoughtfully. "If our Society is good for anything, it would take in anybody who loved a garden, whether he happened to have one at the moment or not."

"Then," said Heather, "I propose that we call it 'The Guild of the Garden Lovers,' what do you think?"

The others agreed that the name would suit their ideas very well.

"And of course, Rosemary must be President," said Violet.

Rosemary remarked that she did not see the necessity, but would try if they wished it. How should the Members' fitness be decided on?

"You will have to put them through an examination," said Violet. "We can draw up some questions. Let's see."

"Number One: 'Can you be interested in your garden all the year round?'" Heather went on.

“ Number Two : ‘ Do other people’s gardens put you out of conceit with your own ? ’ ”

“ Very good,” said Rosemary. “ Number Three : ‘ Do you care for your plants as individuals ? ’ ”

“ And,” added Daisy, “ Number Four : ‘ Do you like to do your own work, if you can ? ’ That last clause,” she explained, “ is to take in the weak sisters who can’t do much ; and now, please, how are we to get to business ? ”

Hereupon followed an animated discussion. Actual meetings could not be frequent, as all four had ties at home, but something might be done by writing. After some talk, and the rejection of a scheme or two which seemed over ambitious, Rosemary suggested that they might feel their way by setting down any difficulties which arose, and seeing whether the other Members could offer solutions to these problems. This appeared to be feasible, and presently Heather added the idea of a monthly letter or paper, to be written by each in turn, on any subject likely to be of interest to the Guild. The President undertook to have such papers typewritten, and sent round, and moreover, agreed to write the first one, so as to give the thing a start. Matters having been thus put into a promising condition, the friends discovered regretfully that it was time to separate.

OUR OWN GARDENS

DEAR GUILD SISTERS,—

When we were talking about the glorification of display which often annoyed us in the gardening papers, there seemed to be some matters of interest connected with the subject, into which we had not time to go then. Daisy said very truly that no one prepared striking effects for himself, and that suggested various questions to my mind, as to the object of our gardening, why we did it in one way rather than another, and even why we did it at all. As far as we four are concerned, I know that a child's direct "Because I like it" would be a perfectly true answer, but in no sense a complete one.

Regarding doing it at all, for a good many of us there is no choice, for, except in an absolutely townified street, most houses have some scrap of garden, and indeed, in many rigid London streets, there are bits at the back. Dreary and miserable as they often are, we can't annihilate them, and the same remark applies to the much despised villa and suburban gardens, and so to all the rest. Something must be done with them, even if they are left

to run wild they are still there, and the various ways in which people deal with them are full of interest. Very often the owner merely regards such a bit of garden as an appendage to the house, which must be kept in decent order, if it is visible to the outer world, exactly as his front door must be painted and his steps whitened. In the same way something extra needs to be done in spring, just as the house is cleaned and fresh curtains put up in the windows, not from any special pleasure in the garden, but from an entirely proper desire that the premises shall be in good order, which usually means, not inferior to the houses in the neighbourhood, at the least expenditure of time and trouble.

Now everybody is free to arrange these things as they like, and we cannot blame any one who deals with his garden in this way, provided he is honest about it, nevertheless it does result in more harm than might be supposed. To begin with, we all know that anything done on the line of least resistance is not satisfactory, and a garden arranged with the least practicable amount of thought and trouble is bound to be a dull conventional affair, helping to set up a low standard in such matters. What the nurseryman suggests, or has suggested some previous year, is pretty sure to be repeated, and it is no blame to the nurseryman if he proposes

the things which he can most easily supply. Beyond his ideas, what the neighbours have is the usual standard, and so the dull type of garden spreads.

But there is a more serious evil yet. It may not occur to the worthy householder that there is any harm in saying, "I can't have visitors see the garden looking shabby," but by so saying, he lets in the idea that his action is to be governed, not by his own pleasure in the garden, or even by his own sense of order and fitness, but by the effect produced on the minds of outsiders. It needs very little reflection to see how, once this evil principle is admitted, a door is opened to all the show, the tyranny of fashion, and the display which we were talking about. It matters very little how much knowledge, how much taste, how much skill in massing colours and arranging groups we may have, if we are mentally squinting at the effect on somebody else, we shall never have a real garden and we shall be degrading our most ancient craft. Unfortunately the idea has a most insidious way of pervading where we might least expect it, and without being expressed, there is often a tacit assumption that the object of your gardening is to surpass your neighbours, or else to strike the outsider. Then these objects come to be unconsciously accepted by the owner, and he asks, not "What will be the most satisfactory thing to me?" but "What will look

best to other people ? ” And so the false notion gets stronger, and biasses the otherwise excellent advice given by some of those who speak with authority.

It is distressing to find a writer whose ideas and feelings on most points seem all that could be wished, assuming that it is a legitimate source of satisfaction when you have some plant not to be seen in any other garden in the neighbourhood !

My Guild Sisters will not suppose that I forget that the precisely opposite doctrine has been set forth both well and wisely by those whom the gardening world holds in high esteem, truly “ love gardeners,” who love each particular plant and the garden as a whole, far too well to allow them to be spoilt by any such mean considerations. We look to them as our examples and best helpers in fighting these influences which are spoiling “ the purest of human pleasures,” and we cannot be grateful enough for them. But it is no use denying that there is a great deal of pressure in the opposite direction. Reduced to plain words, this is what underlies a large proportion of garden talk and writing, “ Everybody does so and so, therefore you must do it too,” or else, “ Nobody has yet got this or that novelty, so you must be quick and get it, so as to be superior,” and it takes a little courage to maintain that you have no desire either in one

direction or the other. Somehow it has a kind of selfish sound to say that you do anything just for your own pleasure, and yet if one comes to think of it, does any art give pleasure if the artist does not do it because he loves it? There is a moot point whether gardening may truly be called an art, but it certainly has this in common with the fine arts, that it must please you to do it, if it is to give pleasure to any one else. *Please*, mind you, not satisfy. No true artist is ever quite satisfied with his own work, and no true gardener with his part in the result of his gardening. He may be satisfied, absolutely satisfied, with the beauty of the plants he grows, but that does not depend on him, while half the interest of gardening comes from the constant perception of improvements to be made in arrangement and culture and what not. That they may turn out not to be improvements in the end does not matter in the least.

So if our gardens are to be satisfactory, they must be our own to begin with, our own by right of love, whoever the soil may happen to belong to, our own because they do, more or less, express our tastes and likings, even our fancies. This is no hindrance whatever to our seeking eagerly for all the advice and suggestions which we can get from any quarter towards the carrying out of our notions; in fact, it is much easier to absorb helpful ideas from

other people when we know what we want to do, than when we are feebly trying to copy what others have done. Much hindrance to this making our gardens our own has been caused by narrowing the proper pleasure to be got from them down to admiration of the beauty of the flowers, and lately there has been an inclination to think mainly of their colour and how it shall be arranged. Now colour is important to the beauty of a garden, but it is not everything, and beauty is important to the enjoyment of a garden, but it is not everything. We want to do something more in our own gardens than to go about merely staring at beautiful objects, as one does at a flower show. We want anticipation and surprise and memory, the looking forward to a new treasure, the delight of finding a new friend even more charming than we had expected, the unfailing joy when an old friend comes back from a winter sleep. We want, too, all that world of association, often more closely connected with scent than sight, we want the curious, and odd, and suggestive, everything, in short, that we sum up as "interest."

You remember the woman who said that her husband was "good enough, but totally uninteresting"—well, a good many gardens are beautiful enough, but very uninteresting, because only one form of garden pleasure has been thought of. It is

quite true that interest must vary with each person, and therefore it would be absurd to expect the professional gardeners to cater for it, but we may complain when it is ignored, and one form of garden pleasure is forced on everybody alike, usurping all attention. Then it is time for us to protest, not always in words, maybe, but by quietly taking leave to enjoy ourselves in our own way.

Those who are the most skilled, and get the most enjoyment out of their special way of treating their gardens, will not quarrel with us for so doing; the true garden artist who loves to combine tree and plant and flower into a living picture, will always be the first to own the importance and interest of each item which makes up that picture, and will be quite willing that other people should deal with them in the way which pleases them best. On the other hand, it is the devotees of making effects—to impress somebody else, who will assume that we *must* follow the latest fashion, till we begin to feel a little shy in owning that it does not interest us in the least.

This holds good of the newly introduced varieties of familiar plants.

Suppose hardy British ferns are in question, and you happen to prefer the simple typical forms of hartstongue, or ladyfern, to the divided, frilled, or feathered shapes into which the pretty things have



BRITISH FERNS IN ORIGINAL FORMS

varied themselves (I believe most varieties of British ferns have come from natural sports), immediately the scornful phrases of " Absurd to have anything so inferior," " How can you like such poor varieties ? " are fairly certain to be heard. Never mind, stick to what you really like and think prettiest, and your garden will be the better for it. If from association, or any other cause, you have a liking for " the quilled rosettes " of the double dahlia, don't be bullied out of it, not if Mr. Robinson himself stood on your garden path and denounced you as having no soul for such a preference ! Not that he would dream of doing anything of the sort, but any way, your garden, as well as your soul, is entirely your own affair. Let us not be daunted by the lofty sentence so often pronounced, " Such a thing is not worth growing " ; if it gives us pleasure, it is emphatically worth our while to grow it, and such distinct preferences help to give our gardens character, and make them interesting.

There is another way in which individual taste makes itself felt. One gardener likes to stick to well known plants with which he is sure to succeed, another loves the interest of experimenting with something fresh, and so on indefinitely. It would be good for all of us if this variety were more encouraged, especially in the smaller gardens, for in large ones more liberty seems to be conceded. I should

like our wise editors to say to one gardener of limited space, " You like to have only a few kinds of things, and to grow them as well as possible ? Well, don't let your garden become stereotyped, and it is sure to be pretty and satisfactory." And to another, " You enjoy trying experiments of all sorts ? Then keep your novelties within reasonable bounds, and your garden must be interesting, and may be beautiful." But when one reads page after page of advice about small gardens, what a sameness there is apt to be in them all. Still, encouraged or discouraged, the character of the garden depends on the person who directs it, and no stranger can possibly deal with that.

The exclusive devotion to beauty of which I spoke just now, has another unfortunate consequence, in that the minor sources of garden pleasure get overlooked. Yet to some of us there is much satisfaction in the actual working, the dealing with Mother Earth, the tricks and vagaries of different plants, the infinite variety, for instance, in their way of pushing up through the ground in spring. Think of the " peaceful spears " of crocus and daffodil and iris, of the slender arches of aconite and anemone, of the snakelike twist of fritillary, of the strange, lurid colouring of some of the young leaves, and the quaint markings of others. Then, how pleasant some bulbs are to handle in their smooth polished

coats, and what a satisfaction there is when one has planned out some change and sees it resulting in improvement.

Probably we have each some pet little pleasure in this way, and I own to one which most people seem to despise, that of coaxing a weakly plant back to health, especially if it has been badly treated, for my garden conscience says that everything should have fair play, and it is pleasant to give it a chance. Though the ruthless "it would be better to throw it away" may sometimes be true, it is not so always, and when careful nursing has brought an invalid plant back to fair health, it has a charm for me, lacking to the possibly more beautiful sisters. But a plant that I really love is never "it" to me, any more than a baby. I have not been able to make up my mind whether one is justified or not in the indirect way in which one's vanity is sometimes set pluming itself in the garden. I cannot fancy a true gardener priding himself simply on the possession of a thing which others have not, but when people come and admire extremely some simple loveliness within the reach of all, you do feel a little disposed to value your own judgment in taking the trouble to have it, when other folks let it pass. However this may be, a garden which we can enjoy in so many ways, becomes our own, like Winstanley's lighthouse,

“Since, for my part, I have built my heart
In the courses of its wall.”

And we must dig our hearts into our gardens, if they are to be much good.

One word remains to be said about the new ideas and ways which are apt to be spoilt by being made just into fashions of the day. We should be on our guard against losing the good that is in them because senseless talk about them worries us unspeakably. You need not make elaborate colour schemes if your tastes and powers do not run that way, but we all like to arrange our dear plants so as to do justice to their charms, and it is very helpful to get hold of the ideas of people who are better judges of colour and form than we may be. Or, to take another instance, it would be truly disastrous if people took to making sham Japanese gardens, for sham they would be and lifeless imitations, however well carried out, because the symbolism of which they are full to the Japanese, must be an unknown tongue to us. But seeing the gardens, or pictures and models of them, is exceedingly useful, because they show us the value of simplicity and moderation, and thoroughly well considered lines, more clearly than any amount of description could do, and these are principles which could be applied to any garden with advantage. Even a person without artistic gifts like myself, can find much

profit in realizing how the arrangements of an entirely artificial garden can be founded on a close study of nature, probably carried on from generation to generation. It is not a matter of copying these natural forms, but of observing them with loving interest, till we get something of their simple grace into our minds, and unconsciously begin to dislike anything stiff, or lumpy, or uncomfortable looking in our own little garden kingdom. And now let me wind up with Dr. Forbes Watson's exquisite sketch of true garden pleasure.

"Now the natural course is for people to delight in loving and cherishing plants from their earliest youth, and in tracing their slow progress into age. Nothing can be more pleasurable than this. At the commencement of the year we see the green tips of the snowdrops and crocuses, then those of the daffodils appear, then some fine morning, unexpectedly, as we enter the garden, a Golden Aconite has lifted its face from a cluster of buds still down-bent, and given us cheerful greeting, coming, perhaps, just where we had least expected it, from some bed where we had forgotten that it grew. Then day after day we watch the slow unfolding buds of the trees, and the progress of each separate plant, as if it were our own child, till at length the latest have put forth their blossoms; and then tenderly and reverently we stand beside them as

they wither, and observe how they yield, some speedily, some slowly, to the force of the increasing cold. In this healthy natural way of garden keeping there is far less thought of splendour. The plants on a bed are not all in bloom together, but spring and summer flowers are everywhere intermixed. Whilst looking at some early blossom, we enjoy the contrast of its more tardy neighbours, beautiful exceedingly now in the first freshness of their budding foliage, and promising far higher glories in two or three months' time. The bed does not display all its treasures at once, or we should rather say that our undazzled eyes can here perceive the high value of plants which are not in bloom ; the whole garden seems one loud voice of exultant hope : ' Take this now, and see besides what a rich bank there is to draw upon for the future.' " (From *Flowers and Gardens*.)

Your affectionate

ROSEMARY.

DAISY'S PROBLEM

PLEASE consider this, Guild Sisters. You may remember where our nut-trees stand, and that below them, on the south-eastern side, there is a steepish bank, and a little border at the bottom of it. The bank is all right, and well covered, so you need not think of that, but the little border is my trouble. The back of it is full of my best beloved daffodils, and a joy they are till the very last comes to an end, but what shall I do when all the leaves are dead and pulled away (and a precious long time that takes), and nothing but bare places remain? And what shall I do for the front of the border? One is so silly sometimes. Because I read somewhere that some good gardener advised growing daffs. through a carpet of pinks, I've been trying to do it for years, and not succeeding, for the double reason that the falling daff. leaves smothered the pinks, and the border getting the drainage of the bank was too damp for them, anyhow. Having just become aware of these facts, the surviving pinks are to be divided, and will make a capital edging

for a drier border near the house, but do tell me how to replace them ?

Your not very clever

DAISY.

Violet's Solution.

If our usually quite-clever-enough Daisy had reminded us of the length and breadth of her border, I could have made a better thing of my solution, because, though I remember the situation quite well, I can't recall the size for the life of me, and it makes a difference. But any way, Daisy, I suggest Lent roses, coloured hellebores that is, for the front of the border. They won't be overwhelmed by the dying leaves, their flowers are lovely, and come at a time when one wants flowers badly. They don't spread so rampantly as the Christmas roses (when these condescend to grow at all), and yet they would have quite foliage enough to mask the departing glories of the daffodils. I seem to remember masses of pretty pink soapwort on that bank, or was it creeping phlox ? Whichever it was, couldn't it be led down in summer to cover the bare patches which you bewail ?

VIOLET.

Heather's Solution.

If your border, Daisy, is really too damp for the pinks, it would be the very place for flag, or German

irises, which would be coming into beauty as the daffodils went off, and by having different sorts as *Pallida*, *Florentina*, *Flava*, etc., you could lengthen the flowering season. For the bare places, my plan would be to prepare some vigorous annual, such as *Convolvulus minor*, and plant them among the daffies as these begin to die away. They ought not to be too thick to prevent this. Wishing you luck with the border,

HEATHER.

Rosemary's Solution.

I must own, my dear Daisy, that my solution is mainly founded on your having told me some time ago that you would have to move a good many small-flowered Michaelmas daisies, mostly of the *ericoides* type, and some larger-flowered "Madonna" ones from a bed where they were not doing well. So it occurred to me that these little bushes would look very pretty in front of your border, and finish the flowering season handsomely. Between them, as they must not be too close to each other, I should put forget-me-not seedlings in the autumn, replacing them when they got shabby by little plants of that much ill-treated small beauty blue lobelia, which would luxuriate in the slight damp of the border. Then I would overplant the daffodils with a peren-

nial, which they could grow through, without hurting either it or themselves. Green heuchera would do very well, as it has the advantage of increasing fast, and the leaves are delightful to use with cut flowers. That would furnish the border all the year round.

ROSEMARY.

Daisy's Reply.

All your solutions are good, dear Sisters, but I am going to take Rosemary's, partly because it disposes of my little starworts (that is such a nice short for Michaelmas daisy), and partly because I should be a little afraid that the roots of the other things might encroach on the daffodils. I should, of course, have given the size of the border, as Violet said. Her notion of the Lent roses was most attractive, but as the border is rather long, they would have run to more money than the exchequer could stand just now—there are some big things to renew this autumn. I like Heather's *Minor convolvulus* so much, that I might sometimes use it in place of the lobelia, unless it would overpower my little bushes. Perhaps Heather will tell me that privately.

Yours gratefully,

DAISY.



MADONNA STARWORTS

FROM VIOLET TO ROSEMARY

MY DEAR ROSEMARY,—

You will know why I am not able to write a proper paper this time, only a rambling sort of letter, which is but distantly connected with our Guild, still I wanted to try and write, now that I am nearly myself again. I need not talk much about my illness as you know the facts, only I think being ill is a very good way of finding out what sort of a husband one has got! I've found out, and am quite satisfied, but there—you know Reg. I should have got well much quicker, I think, if I hadn't wrenched my foot pretty badly the very day before I collapsed, for that kept me lying still after I might have otherwise been getting about, and the upshot of that was nerves! I'm rather ashamed of it, but they were too much for me.

My nurse had to go to a bad case when I had just begun to be on the sofa in the evenings, and nobody else was available. Indeed, I didn't exactly want nursing, as Annie could do all that was really necessary, but I was a very poor thing, and Reg. got frantic, till at last one day he told me that he had

asked his cousin Lavender to come for a visit ! I got a regular fit of the jumps ! It wasn't that I hadn't always liked Lavender Maynard, but it came over me all in a minute, that the house would be in a muddle, the maids would do inconceivable follies, the garden would be a horror, and a stranger would be there to see it all ! I had just enough sense not to let Reg. see what a fool I was, I am thankful to say, but when he had gone to his business, I *did* have a time. I was "just light-headed with lying in bed," as a woman in the village said the day after her baby was born, and it seemed incredible that I should ever be better. I did my best to fight it, but when I heard the carriage coming from the station with Lavender, I should have liked to scream. I didn't, though, and before I knew it, Lavender was in the room, with her hat off, and her cool grey dress looking as fresh as possible, and her soft face, cool and fresh too, leaning down to mine, brimful of kindness and sympathy.

"What a bad time you have had, dear !" she said ; and at the sound of her voice all my ruffled-up nerves began to smooth down, like little feathers being stroked.

"It's getting over now," I said, and I couldn't have said it five minutes before.

She smiled, and said, "Indeed, I hope it will soon be quite a thing of the past,"

We talked a little more, and then she said, "Your good Annie tells me I am to have some luncheon, so I won't keep it waiting now that I have seen you. I caught a glimpse of the garden as I drove up, and it looks even prettier than when I was here before." She looked round. "Is there any reason why you should not have a flower or two up here?"

"No, there's nothing against it," I said. I didn't want to tell her how poor Annie's lumpy bunches had worried me.

Lavender began to move towards the door. "It's a pity you should not have a little sheaf out of your own field," she remarked, pausing by the mantelpiece. "And you have such pretty flower-holders too," and with that she gently stroked my pet Vallauris vase with the tip of her finger. And then, oh Rosemary, the blessed woman quite instinctively *put it straight* on the bracket!

"Oh, thank you, Lavender," I burst out, "it has so teased me to see it just wrong, and Nurse never could understand what I meant."

She laughed softly. "Such a pretty thing deserves justice," she said, and added as she glided away, "How charming it will look in spring, with Garland Lily daffodils in it."

Lavender must be a bit of a witch! She had made me see the pale daffodils standing up in the grey green vase against the dark background, just

as plainly as if they had been actually there, and the pleasure of it charmed away most of my foolishness. The idea that any one else was going to bring me flowers would have worried me badly, but I had got confidence in Lavender already, and was able to eat my luncheon quite calmly.

After a while she came back, carrying a small tray, and on it two little clear-glass vases. In one was a superb truss of geranium, the true scarlet sort, with one deep green leaf, and a tiny spray of creamy clematis hanging down. The other held just one perfect, pure-tinted tea-rose, my dear Anna Olivier, and the beauty of both of them made me gasp with delight.

Lavender set the geranium exactly where I could see it best. "I always fancy clear colour if I'm not well," she said; "anything muddled is fidgeting." Then she put the rose on the table near me. "That lovely creature wants nothing with her," and she added, dropping a spray of lemon verbena on the quilt, "Don't you like something with a little bite to it to rub in your fingers? And your verbena is making really magnificent growth this year."

I liked it very much indeed, and told her so, then she went on, "Now, my dear, I've had a most excellent luncheon, and am going to have the luxury of putting my clothes away in that splendid cupboard—you certainly do provide most amply for your

visitors. And then I shall take a rest, as I was up rather early this morning. Annie is sitting in the next room with her sewing, so you have only to ring your little bell"—she put it within easy reach—"if you want anything. Otherwise you won't be disturbed till tea-time. Is the light as you like it?"

"Everything is as I like it," I said, "especially my sweetest Lavender."

"What a charming compliment!" she said, and went away laughing.

I don't know what she had done to me, but I lay back with a delightful conviction that after all the house was in order, the maids were doing very well, the garden was thriving, I was soon going to get well and to have Lavender there was extremely comfortable. And yet she had not exactly talked about these things. Then it dawned on me that to know that nobody would come in for a definite time, while there was some one at hand if I should want her, was precisely what I had been craving for without knowing it. (Afterwards Lavender told me that my eyes showed I needed a little absolute rest and quiet, but it would not do to let me feel deserted.) It was, too, so clever of her to tell me exactly what she meant to do, so that I should not worry about her, and I lay and gazed at my flowers, feeling happier than I had done for long. What good they did me! The strong, clean geranium colour seemed to put

fresh life into me, while the soft clematis kept it from being too burning. I found myself whispering, "Vital spark of heavenly flame," which seemed appropriate somehow, though I haven't much idea what I meant by it.

And when I was tired of that, I turned back to the rose, and her scent came in little whiffs to me, and mixed with the lemon of the verbena in my hand. It was the fair Anna's loveliest stage, just half blown, and the colour and the texture were beyond words. I kept on following the curves and swells of the petals, till I began to think they were like waves, rising and falling, and then they turned into tea-rose coloured waves, and then—I was fast asleep.

When I awoke, it was tea-time, and Lavender had mysteriously got back into the room again with the basket table, and Annie was coming in with the tray, and I was so much better that Reg. found me on the sofa when he came home. Dear, how the man rejoiced over the success of his experiment !

After that I got on fast, and Lavender and I had a delightful time together, and many great talks until she went away yesterday. I told her all about the Guild, which interested her very much, and I want to get her into it somehow. She says she couldn't be a regular member, partly because she has no garden now (though I don't think that matters), and partly because she has to go about so much, that she could

not be sure of getting the papers sent on. That I know is true, as people are always calling out to her to come and help them, just as Reg. did for me, but if we can connect her in any way, I think she would write a paper for us on "Invalids' Flowers," which I am sure she would do well. I enclose her present address. And I also send a little problem which occurred to me while looking out of the library window. I find that, for once, I do want to make a colour effect for my own pleasure.

Yours affectionately,

VIOLET.

Part of Rosemary's Answer.

I know enough of Lavender Maynard to be quite sure that she is all you say, and to be truly thankful that she was able to come to you. She would have been a delightful Guild Sister, garden or no garden, but I can understand that her frequent moves might make it troublesome to her. However, we will make her a "Corresponding Member," and I think I can manage to keep sufficiently in touch with her to let her know what we are doing, and to send her any papers that she would like to see. I am writing to her to-day to say this, and to beg her to do us the "Invalids' Flowers" paper, for I am certain we should all like it. Oddly enough, Daisy has been at me for a paper, not exactly about invalids, but about

delicate gardeners, suggested by some friends of hers. It is an interesting subject, and I might think of it when my next turn comes, if I can't put it off upon Heather. Take care of yourself for all our sakes. You shall have the solutions to your problem before long.

ROSEMARY.

VIOLET'S PROBLEM

THERE are two small beds on the turf beyond the library window, which do not please me at all as they are now. They are pretty enough in the earlier part of the year, for then they are full of forget-me-not, or something like that, out of which rise my beloved dragon tulips (I always think they are much more like Japanese dragons than mere parrots), but the tiresome beauties spoil if they are not lifted, and so I can't put anything permanent over them. Hitherto the beds have been filled either with annuals or something brought out from the greenhouses, but they don't do well, because the shade from the trees near them, which is nothing to speak of in spring, gets so heavy in the later summer, that nothing flowers properly, and that bit of lawn looks very dull from the window, as the shrubs beyond happen to be somewhat dark. Consider of it, my Sisters, and please don't propose begonias, because I have no love for them, they flop so.

VIOLET.

Heather's Solution.

Thinking of your shaded beds, my mind turns to

something yellow. How would the tall lemon Calceolaria (*Amplexicaulis*) do, mixed with fine-leaved white marguerites? Or, if the shade were too thick for the daisies, put sweet tobacco. And if you tried, couldn't you so plant the tulips as to avoid pulling up the tobaccos? I could send you some of the calceolaria cuttings, if you like to have them.

HEATHER.

Daisy's Solution.

I should suggest a good selection of varieties of mimulus for your beds, as they would certainly enliven the view with their quaint splashes of colour. The yellow musk mimulus is pretty too, and would like the shade. If you have any Japanese spireas that you could put with them, the effect would be charming.

DAISY.

Rosemary's Solution.

I am not sure if my solution is practicable. Could you turn out your greenhouse fuchsias into the beds, and prepare a good many small pots of cut-leaf sweet geranium to go with them? The latter grow very fast, and it is pleasant to have plenty of them.

ROSEMARY.

Violet's Answer.

I am going to be greedy, and take both Heather and Daisy's solutions, one for each bed ; they will do excellently together, and I should be deeply grateful for the cuttings, Heather. I should have liked the fuchsias and geraniums, but the truth is that I use as many as I can well house in winter of both these things on the other side of the garden. " D'où puisez vous toutes ces idées là ? "

Your much relieved

VIOLET.

AN INVALID'S FLOWERS

BY LAVENDER

WHEN first Violet proposed that I should try to make some notes on "flowers for invalids," it seemed to me that there would not be enough matter to interest the Guild Sisters, who have so kindly adopted me as a correspondent, but now I find, on thinking it over, that the subject grows so much that I must limit myself to some parts of it. For the variety of invalids is scarcely less than that of the flowers, and we shall perhaps do best to take a sort of average case, as, if we arrive at any working ideas on the matter, it will not be very difficult to apply them as may be necessary.

For convenience then, let us suppose our invalid to be a woman, not too ill to take an interest in her surroundings, but not strong enough to attend to them much herself. Let us further suppose that she has some one who does look after these surroundings, and is lovingly anxious to do all that is possible for the invalid's comfort and pleasure. Obviously, therefore, these remarks are rather for the minis-

trant's consideration than that of the invalid herself, and so we may all be interested in them, for this is an office that any one may be called upon to fill. It may be a very touching one, even setting aside personal affection for the sufferer. Few things have seemed more pathetic to me than the sight of one, once a zealous and energetic gardener, loving the work and all connected with it, being forced to depend on others for any share in that familiar pleasure. Still there are compensations, for such a true garden-lover can appreciate the most gorgeous orchid from a palatial hothouse, and yet needs only a sprig of budding hawthorn from the hedgerow to be able to "dream the rest of spring." Some of us have seen the faithful flowers carry on their silent mission of consolation to the very verge of this life. Rosemary quoted Dr. Forbes Watson in her paper, so you will remember the beautiful words in his friend's Introduction, which tell how in his short, suffering passage to another world, there came visions of unearthly flowers which cheered and supported the dying naturalist and saint, even in that terrible hour of agony.

But we will hope that our invalid is going to get better some day, and in the meantime, how shall we best advise her anxious friend as to the plants and flowers in her sick-room? First and foremost, consider her own particular likings, and still more her

dislikings, for, if you cannot get her all that she likes, at least, you need never confront her with anything for which she has a distaste.

Plainly, nothing but experience of the individual person can be any guide here, tastes being proverbially unaccountable, and you may have also to consider the circumstances of the illness, as well as private associations. Scent is apt to be more actively liked or disliked than colour, and it is still more difficult to guess which it will be. For instance, I think heliotrope one of the most delicious scents in the world, and yet I remember an old lady who considered any one who owned to liking it as guilty of rank affectation, they could not really find it agreeable. So we can only be careful with our invalid on this point. Aromatic foliage is generally pretty safe; few people dislike sweet verbena and geranium (though there is one sweet geranium which inclines to peppermint, and might be risky), Rosemary's namesake and mine, including the flower in each case, lemon balm and thyme. Perhaps one charm in these scented leaves is that they never overpower one, and the scent does not come out strongly unless the leaf is rubbed. Then such delicately perfumed flowers as tea-roses, single pinks, and outdoor violets are usually liked; frame violets are sometimes too heavy in scent, but here comes in the question of quantity. One head of even such a heavily scented

blossom as the Many-flowered Narcissus may send a delicious waft of perfume through the invalid's room, when a bunch of them would be intolerable.

But when you have made a liberal discount of everything at all doubtful, there will be plenty left to choose from for your invalid's enjoyment. Here the point might be raised, that much must depend on what you can get. This is certainly true, and yet much the same principles will hold good, whether your supplies are drawn from a range of glass-houses and conservatories, or from a modest garden, or even from the greengrocer's shop, for the main things to think of in each case will be Moderation, Simplicity, and Interest. It will be convenient to speak of cut flowers and growing plants separately, for, though the selection of both will go on the same lines, the treatment and arrangement will differ of necessity.

Let us, therefore, consider Moderation in connexion with our invalid's cut flowers, and it needs consideration, for it frequently happens that where there is no lack of means, the invalid is really overdone with the amount brought into her room, especially at certain times of year. It is done with the best intentions, but a number of vases often of mixed flowers, spotted about a room, is a tax on the languid attention, and may even fidget the irritable nerves which want so much soothing. Moreover, it is not possible to keep a number of flower holders and their

contents in the dainty and fresh condition which should be the rule in a sick-room without a good deal of work, and the sense of extra labour on her behalf is often wearing to the invalid, and should be avoided if possible. Otherwise we may, unwittingly, be arousing that painful thought which frequently weighs heavily on these dear suffering souls, "I give so much trouble," and that is the last thing we want to do.

An almost ideal condition of things as regards the invalid's flowers, would be that she should never be without something either pretty or interesting in her room all the year round, with occasional bursts of floral beauty, say, for a family festival or birthday when friends most naturally express their kindly feelings by sending flowers. There are also Nature's own festivals, as when the primroses come in their amplest profusion. When this coincides with Easter, there is a ready means of bringing some fuller sense of the great Resurrection Festival into the invalid's room, with the sweet silent tokens of reviving life in the world outside. Then in summer when all the windows can be open, we can have a real Feast of Roses. These innocent flower revels will be enjoyed all the more for the previous moderation, and when they are over, the return to quieter pleasures will again be a change and refreshment. Probably those who have always plenty of flowers at command, will

find a difficulty in restraining their kindly instinct to lavish abundance on the sick one at all times, but they will discover, if they go further into the matter, that their good will is not wished to be thwarted, but only turned in another direction.

Simplicity is next to be thought of, by which I mean that elaborate combinations of colour, or studied effects of form, are rarely suitable for an invalid, because, in the first place, not many people can arrange them satisfactorily, and a pretentious failure is always irritating; and secondly, even when well carried out, they cannot be appreciated without a certain amount of mental effort, rather fatiguing than restful. It is not necessary to be tied by exact rules of using only one colour, or one sort of flower at a time, as, though it is the prettiest way for many flowers, others look best in harmonious variety, while strong contrasts require care, and one had better be sparing with them. If you have but few colours, a limited quantity of flowers arranged to look their very best, and so placed that the invalid can easily enjoy them, you will hardly go far wrong. I should always like the flowers for this purpose to look as if they had been very little handled, this preserves the delightful freshness which is half their charm, and it need not prevent the necessary slitting of stalks, and standing deep in water before they come to the sick-room, which prolongs their beauty.

A word may be said on simplicity in the flower receptacles. Twisted, fantastic, or highly ornamented vases seem out of place where you want to produce a pleasantly soothing effect, unless, indeed, your invalid has old associations with some special article, for then it may sprawl as wildly as possible, and still be better for her, than the best-shaped vase which has nothing connected with it. But in a general way, simple and unobtrusive shapes are the most pleasing, and a good test for a flower vase is to see whether it looks better with flowers in it than without. A simple vase by no means implies a small one, far from it, as there is no reason that you should be confined to the use of small flowers. Nothing could be more suitable for an invalid's room in spring-time than a noble branch of cherry blossom, or double crab, and in late summer, a yard long shoot of Aimee Vibert rose, with a great head of lovely white flowers, and these handsome things require something large, and above all, steady, to hold them. Never let your patient have the anxiety of thinking that her flowers will be knocked over by the first draught through the room. Other things being equal, clear, that is, uncoloured glass vases and bowls of good shapes, such as the well-known Munstead glasses, are hard to beat for your purpose, they look so clean, and the water sparkles so brightly in them, and you can see how fast the flowers are drinking it up.

There are also some good glasses of a dark green colour, one especially with a solid glass foot, which would be delightful for an invalid's flowers, as nothing could upset it. Besides variously sized vases, one or two deep saucers or small bowls would be found very useful. Filled with damp moss, you can stand snowdrops or small daffodils upright in them, and these never look so pretty as in their natural position when growing. A ten-foot spike of hollyhock would be somewhat overpowering indoors, but you can give your invalid the pleasure of studying the exquisite colours and texture of the hollyhock by taking off some of the separate blooms, and sinking them in the moss bowl. Yet another use for the bowl is to fill it with a wreath of forget-me-not, which will go on growing and opening fresh blue eyes for days together if kept supplied with water and a little charcoal.

It is a curious thing that one needs to press the claims of Interest (which includes variety) even more among those who have ample supplies of flowers, than where everything is on a modest scale. Go to see an invalid with fine gardens and glass-houses, and if you are used to noticing such points, you will be able to guess pretty nearly what kinds of cut flowers she will have, according to the time of year, and you may predict almost certainly that these flowers will all have been cut at one stage, with the

object of showing their full beauty. The motive is probably, an excellent one, the gardener, or whoever cuts them, wishes to give the invalid of the best, and in the highest perfection. Well and good, but it should be remembered that even perfection becomes monotonous, and besides the beauty of the developed flower, why should not the object of these kindly cares also enjoy the beauty of the slowly opening bud, the dainty finish of the seed vessel, the glowing tints of the autumn leaf, and the cheeriness of the ripened berry? But how seldom are any of these things brought to her, unless she happens to be either an artist or a botanist, and asks for them herself. I think this matter is of some importance, as our object in supplying the flowers at all is to cheer and enliven the invalid's restricted life, and break up the monotony of it as far as possible. It may be that we can only do so to a limited extent, never mind, a few minutes of interest or surprise over some new little thing may shed a feeling of freshness over an otherwise weary hour, and that is worth the expenditure of a good deal of thought and trouble. These will be more required for this service than costly appliances, or large gardens, which may be a satisfaction to those who do not happen to have these pleasant things. It has been said that the desire for too many flowers in the garden led to the bad forms of bedding out, which, as we know, made

it uninteresting, and perhaps something of the same idea has led to a want of interesting as well as beautiful objects in the sick-room.

I need hardly say that to advocate variety in this connexion is not to contradict what has been said about moderation. That must always be attended to, but we should so arrange matters, that the invalid might often feel inclined to say, "What fresh charming thing are you bringing me to-day?" Naturally, this will be much easier if she is already interested in growing things, but even if she only regards them as a sort of decoration, variety is a thing to aim at, that the decoration may be as interesting as possible, so exercise your ingenuity as much as you can.

A few classes of plant forms, too often neglected, may be indicated here. Buds of all sorts are delightful to watch, especially in the early months of the year. Narcissus, for instance, open into larger bloom in water than out of doors, so do some of the charming early irises. Try not only flower buds, but woody twigs, which will open their tight little buttons, and let out the first glimpse of spring green, while the winter jessamine will quickly show its gold stars. Prettiest of all are the buds of the common almond tree when they begin to open, for the fairy-like petal peeping through the brown outer casing has a deeper and more exquisite pink than the fully

expanded flower ever shows. And it is no small advantage to see anything so beautiful close at hand, and with leisure to enjoy it.

Most fruit blossoms will open in this way indoors, especially if the branch is well slit up, and put into warm water, and if many pieces cannot be spared from the kitchen garden, there may be some trees which are grown mainly for their flowers, as the double varieties, while, failing all else, there is the blackthorn in the hedge, which Browning likened to the bright side of a trouble. Indeed there are many wild things which can be used. Few people know how freely the lovely wild roses will open their buds in water. I have never forgotten the sight of the large double drawing-rooms in a country house in Scotland, which were entirely decorated with huge branches of a crimson red variety of wild rose. They were in deep jars heavy enough to balance them, and were placed on the tops of massive bookcases and stands to be out of the way, and the effect, on looking up, was most beautiful. The flowers looked perfectly fresh, but the lady of the house said that the branches had been cut at least a week. On a smaller scale, this could not fail to give pleasure and it would probably also be successful with the many beautiful single roses now grown in gardens.

Then think of the large class of flowers which we must mass in the garden, if they are not to be over-

looked, but which, nevertheless, have a delicate beauty if we see a few of them near at hand. Such flowers may sometimes be very pleasant to an invalid, they do not challenge attention or admiration as the grander beauties do, but as one looks at them quietly, a gentle charm seems to steal out from their little faces. Several mossy saxifrages have this kind of bloom, so have the creeping campanulas, and many small annuals, to suggest only a few amongst a crowd, but a tuft of wood sorrel is the best example of all.

Other little flowers have a gaiety, almost sauciness, about them which is very cheerful, such as Maiden Pinks, Pearls of Spain, to use the pretty old name for the white grape hyacinth, winter cyclamens and the "Water Babies," as a friend calls the winter aconites, with their quaint green frills. Again there are very quietly coloured flowers at which we must look closely before we notice the wonderful markings and veinings which they possess, such as the wild orchises, and that maligned wild iris with the ugly name and glorious red berries in winter.

But our invalid need not be deprived of vivid colour, however much she may appreciate the soft shades; let her sometimes see a burning Oriental poppy, with its strange blue-black heart (such splendour is positively invigorating), or a great spike of pure blue larkspur, and revel in the deliciousness of it.

Another group of plants not to be neglected are those which have a strange, quaint, or mysterious kind of beauty. This includes plants of very different stature, from the creeping Azarums with their funny tiny bells, to the "stately beautifulnesse" of the Crown Imperials. Not that I should suggest this last named as a suitable flower for the sick-room, it is too tall, and the smell might be disliked, but it might well be represented by the lesser fritillaries, especially our native Snake's Head, which combines perfect grace and mysterious ways more than any flower I know. From the first moment when the bud twists out on to the ground, just like the head of a little snake, all through the graceful drooping of the rounded bell, to the raising of the urn-shaped seed vessel, poised on the slender column of the upright stem, it is always fascinating and beautiful, and the white variety is the most beautiful of all. For wonderful blending of colour and wild irregularity of form, nothing can exceed Violet's favourite Dragon Tulips, and one wants to be able to look at them in a leisurely way, in order to appreciate the audacity with which the tints are thrown together, reminding one of the chance freaks of enamels and some metal work.

For a change now and then, it is worth while to fill a glass with leaves alone, if only to notice the infinite variety of shades to be found merely in green

leaves, setting aside the tinted and autumnal kinds ; and yet another pleasant change might be made by contrasted forms, using, say, flag-leaved iris rising through ferns, or spirea foliage. Much, too, might be said of the beauties of nuts and berries of all kinds, and seed vessels are easy things to have in an invalid's room, because they need not be put into water, while their interest is endless. The " mother-of-pearl flakes " of Honesty make a charming ornament in any room for months together.

Before going on to speak of growing plants, I should like to mention a plan which sounds as if it might be very useful in an invalid's service, but which I have not yet tried myself. The requirements are very simple, two or three bowls, and some moist earth, probably those convenient " wood pulp " bowls, and the prepared peat which everybody now uses for growing bulbs, would answer perfectly. The originator of the idea begins in January to lift and plant in her bowls anything of suitable size then starting to grow, and changes them with each month. She seems mostly to use wild plants, beginning with daisies, winter dandelion, and so on, naturally having greater choice as the season progresses, and leaving off in summertime. There is no reason that the same thing should not be done with the early garden flowers, single primroses, polyanthuses, forget-me-nots, and many

more, anything not so deeply rooted as to resent disturbance, and which could afterwards be replanted in the garden. I think of trying the plan in the autumn by planting some forget-me-not and other seedlings in a bowl, and seeing how they get on. Certainly it would afford a very pleasant variety in indoor flowers. Some people lift tulips and scillas just as they are coming into flower, and use them indoors, replanting them afterwards, and they are said not to mind, but it seems a risky practice with bulbs in full growth.

Turning now to the subject of growing plants, and how they can best be used for an invalid's enjoyment, we must distinguish between the permanent inhabitants of the room, and those brought in for a longer or shorter time, and we shall find that this practically corresponds with the division into foliage and flowering plants. Of course, we have seen, especially in cottage windows, flowering plants doing extremely well, which stay there all the year round, but the conditions of an invalid's room will usually make it most convenient to consider the flowering plants as temporary visitors, and to be content with foliage ones as permanent companions. This is always supposing that the invalid cares to have them, for what was said previously about overdoing with cut flowers, applies even more to plants, as they are larger and more conspicuous. One naturally-grown

azalea, for instance, not too full blown to go on opening its buds into lovely flowers one after another, would be a delight for weeks, but sick people do not want to feel as if they were in a crowded greenhouse. So perhaps it is rather a good thing than otherwise, that many people have not the command of ample conveniences for growing flowering pot plants, and therefore their choice is restricted. Those who have such advantages should be careful in their selections of plants, and watchful that these are not brought in to the invalid in a dull routine, which happens oftener than it should.

Bulbous plants of all sorts are a great standby for invalids : I have known even a blind old woman amused and interested in her last illness by *feeling* the daily growth of the smooth stem of a " Monarch of the East " belonging to a little grandson. Before the strange flower opened, the grandmother was blind no more.

Leaving aside for the moment the spring bulbs it is quite possible to bring on such pretty things as Bride gladiolus, ixias, Spanish and other irises, and to introduce them to the invalid's room when they are getting to the flowering stage, only taking the precaution of removing them to a cool and dark room in the evenings. We commonly talk of " spring bulbs," but as a matter of fact, the interest and pleasure of these plants can be spread over many

months, beginning in August, when the Roman hyacinths should be started, and going on till May, when the last jonquil and two-flowered narcissus come to an end. The modern way of growing bulbs in bowls of peat is a godsend to invalids, it is so easy and clean, with neither earth nor water to make a mess, and the growing things can be watched from the time they are once well through their brown quilt. Some of the larger narcissus do better in shingle and water, and the same may be said of white, purple and striped crocuses, which look very well in deep saucers of shingle, but seem to require a good deal of room when grown in peat. Yellow crocuses are best grown in the garden, or in window-boxes, of which more anon. While you are arranging your bulbs, it is worth your while to provide some receptacles not too large to be set near the invalid's bed, should she be confined to it at any time, without being in the way, and crocuses are good things to put into these, to be looked at near by, as their outlines are simple and their colours pure. It is a pity that so few people seem to know the charms of *Crocus Versicolor*, because each big corm produces a whole bunch of delicate white flowers with dark lines marking them, they flower a long time, and are very cheap. If the beautiful autumn *Crocus speciosus* would flower indoors, it would be a charming variety for that time of year, and there is



BULBS IN PEAT AND SHINGLE, WITH CUT
DAFFODILS IN VASE

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no reason against trying it, if you can get the bulbs early enough.

In selecting your bulbs, the main point to consider would be their succession of flowering times, so as to keep the invalid provided with them as long as possible, or at all events, through the early part of the year when cut flowers are scarce. Good catalogues generally have the varieties marked as early, middle, and late-flowering, so it is not really difficult to arrange the matter, and some growers also issue lists drawn up on purpose for indoor cultivation. If I had to name one daffodil only for an invalid's room, my choice would be "Queen of Spain" for purity of colour and dainty grace of growth.

Having sometimes been consulted as to the disposal of bulbs after flowering, I must confess to being a heretic as regards the plan which is usually advised, that of keeping them indoors till the leaves wither before planting them out. If they have been in a warm room, I would pass them on through a cool one, and then to a porch or shed for a few days, and then choose a time without frost to plant them out, peat and all, where they are to remain, setting them somewhat deeply according to their size, and taking particular care not to injure the long leaves more than can possibly be helped. This gives them a chance to drink in the good of air, rain and sunshine, for which purpose the leaves are indispensable, and

so to build up the shrunken bulb. I have scarcely ever known narcissus fail to flower the next year when treated in this way; hyacinth and tulips are less certain, as they are liable to deteriorate in any case, but they will often do fairly well for a time.

Now what can we suggest for later in the year? Though lilies of many kinds can be well grown in pots, they need to be used with discretion, on account of the heavy scent, but there are varieties of amaryllis which are quite safe, for instance, the well-known *Vallota purpurea*, or Scarborough lily (though why Scarborough, nobody has the least idea), a plant which sometimes blooms up to Christmas. Quitting the bulbs, a succession of the smaller chrysanthemums would keep a room cheerful quite into dark days, and some of the small-flowered begonias are excellent room plants.

Passing on now to foliage plants which are to stay mostly in the room, it is necessary to consider the amount of light available for them, as nothing thrives in a dark corner in a room. Also whether there are suitable places for them to stand without being in the way, or liable to be damaged, for if they cannot be had comfortably, they are better away. There are some easily grown plants which I would never have in an invalid's room because of their monotony, such as aspidistras and india-rubber plants. Aralias are better, but they soon get over

large if they thrive at all. Palms are always graceful, and do very well if properly treated, and kept free from dust and scale. Gardeners greatly scorn the green coleus, or Indian nettle, but it is much better for this purpose than the glaring variegated forms, and is by no means to be despised as making a quiet background for brighter plants, while if it can stand out of doors for a while in summer, it gets on all the better.

However, to my mind, nothing is so satisfactory as a good selection of the robust green-house ferns. You will probably be assured that you will have to renew them constantly, that the air of the room will dry them up, that gas (if you use it) will kill them, and that the sun will scorch them to death, none of which things need happen at all, if the ferns are properly treated. I speak with some confidence, having kept ferns in a room facing south, where fire, gas and lamps were constantly used every winter, and yet one haresfoot lived and throve for fifteen years, and then only succumbed to a neglected attack of scale. Ferns in rooms are much more often killed by draughts than anything else, and in these days when some invalids' rooms are temples of the winds, the point needs attention. An inch or two of window open at the bottom with a cold wind blowing in is bad for any plant, but will blacken a fern placed near it as surely as frost, so precautions are needed in the

early mornings when the room is dusted. If the window can be opened from the top, no harm will be done, or if another window can be used for the ferns, that is better still.

Another mistake which destroys many a good fern is watering the root while the leaves are dry, so that the one rots while the others shrivel. If the fern is in proper soil, the roots will do with a very moderate amount of moisture, but the drying effect of the air of the room on the fronds does need to be counteracted, and the difficulty is to do it without wetting the soil too much. Even a fine-rosed watering-pot lets too much through, and you cannot well use a syringe in a sitting-room, while to pour water out of a jug, as I have seen people do, is simply courting disaster. But there is a very easy way of solving the problem. Get a lady's hair-brush, the thicker the bristles are the better; once I had one discarded from a baby's basket, which was ideal, but one from the 6½d. shop will do. Then take a jug or bowl, into which you can dip the brush, full of tepid water, and sprinkle those ferns with it every day of their lives, in the evening in summer, in the morning in winter, and they will get just the moistening of the atmosphere which they need. Maidenheads, however, are not suited to this treatment, as the peculiar texture of their leaves throws off the wet at once, and they rarely seem happy in living-rooms for any

length of time, though I once knew two large plants which throve for many a long day under the rough and ready method of having their fronds frequently held beneath the cold water tap. Still with *Pteris* and *Davellia*, and some of the harder-leaved ferns, there is a wide choice. This brush-watering system, by the way, is very convenient for moistening the peat bowls spoken of above, but the good house-keeper may object that all this sprinkling will be very bad for the carpets. That is quite true, but there are ways of preventing mischief in that direction. When there are only two or three pots, they might be taken to a bathroom or a sink for their sprinkle in winter, and to a balcony or window-sill in summer. But if more ferns are grown, it is better to plant them in wooden boxes, small enough to be lifted easily, then a piece of linoleum under them will keep all safe.

Some ferns make long and thick roots, or rhizomes to be correct, and require the greater space of a box to be happy in; the haresfoot mentioned above wore out two or three boxes by filling them with roots till they split, and the others all seem to do better in the wood. But if this is not convenient, a length of oil-cloth can be spread on the floor, and a good many pots sprinkled on it, and then left to shake off superfluous drops before going back to their places. These places should not be cold ones, for these subtropical

ferns can stand a good deal of mild sunshine. A south window, with a good outside blind for really hot weather, will suit them as well as their mistress ; then she can watch their growth, and the various but ever graceful ways in which the young fronds develop.

It would be pleasant and easy to grow from seed for the invalid's benefit the Baby Ramblers, absurdly called " annual roses," when they are as truly perennial as the biggest rose tree in the garden. Any one of artistic taste would enjoy the perfection of all parts of the little bush, stem, leaf, bud and flower all exactly in keeping, and nothing can be daintier than the wee, delicately-tinted blossoms.

If window-boxes are practicable, a constant source of interest and pleasure can be provided with no great expenditure of cost or trouble, if they are well arranged from the first. What was advised for the ferns applies equally here ; it is better to have two or even three boxes on a window-sill, which can easily be taken away to be refilled, painted, or otherwise attended to, rather than one large one, which requires strong-armed assistance before it can be moved, even to clean the window. Also a double set of boxes is necessary if the sill is to be furnished throughout the year, so that as one group of plants goes out of flower, another may be ready to take its place. For instance, if you plant your first boxes with snowdrops or crocuses early in

autumn, they will be coming up by Christmas, and when they are nothing but leaves fast lengthening, Number Two boxes can be put in the window full of tulips or miniature hyacinths. The tulips should not be either very early or very late ones, and should be short in stature, not more than eight inches tall. While they are blooming, Number One boxes can be prepared for the summer, and these will take a little consideration, because an invalid's window-box must look pretty from within the room, as well as from outside, and many summer plants run up quickly, turning entirely to the light, and presenting to the room only leggy stalks. This is not pretty in any room, and for an invalid it must not be allowed, as she will not want the outlook blocked. But there are plenty of moderate-sized plants to choose from. "Lord Roberts" heliotrope and hanging white campanula is a very pretty combination, so is that of small fuchsias and sweet geranium, keeping the latter well cut back and therefore bushy. The dwarf nasturtiums make charming window-box plants, and if you put in some of that prettiest of variegated plants, Mrs. Pollock geranium, with them, you will have something which will last till it is getting time for the winter boxes to be put in their places. This succession can be varied of course, quite indefinitely. The pretty ivyleaf geraniums so frequently seen in windows are better avoided for

this purpose, partly because their beauty shows chiefly from outside, and partly because the invalid has probably seen them so used till she is tired of them. On the other hand, anything that can be trained up the side of the window, or on a slight arch over the boxes, is a welcome addition.

Don't let the plants be crowded; remember that they will often want water even when it has rained, because the rain has not reached them; consider the aspect in choosing them, and they ought to do well. If you have to use heavy boxes, the substitution of Jadoo fibre for ordinary soil will reduce the weight considerably.

Now there is only one point more about our invalid's flower enjoyments. Sometimes we can control in some measure what she sees from her window, and when this is the case, something might be done in arranging plants and colours in the garden so as to bring pretty effects within her view, or by establishing some old favourites near enough for her to watch their growth. If, too, she is sometimes able to be in the garden, the places where she can sit might be made as attractive as possible.

Finally, supposing her able to go for a summer change, as many invalids do, take advantage of her absence to give her room plants a change too, standing them out either in sun or shade as they may require, and bringing the window-boxes away from

the house for a time. This paper has run on to a much greater length than I intended, but talking of these beloved things is almost as pleasant as handling them, so I trust you will forgive my tax on your patience.

LAVENDER (*Corresponding Member G.G.L.*).

HEATHER'S PROBLEM

DEAREST SISTERS, I have had a catastrophe ! The ivy fence on the south side of the garden has blown down, that is, a great length of it came right down, and the rest is so rotten that it has all to be renewed. Really that large-leaved ivy was much too heavy and ought to have been clipped every year, but the boys said it was much too picturesque to be devastated by my shears. And now I have never once said, " I told you so," and am positively swelling with my sisterly virtue ! The fence is being replaced as quickly as possible, and will be done with that pleasant brown Stockholm tar, so it will be of good colour, and now the question is, what, *what* shall I cover it with ? There are some nice bushes in front of it for part of the space, so I need not think about that piece, but a length of thirty feet or so, from where it takes a kink and faces nearly northwest, will be quite bare. The narrow border in front of it will be dug over and manured before I put anything into it, as the ivy roots took all the goodness out of the ground, so that I had only stonecrops and periwinkles and such like un-

exacting things there at all. But now it is a pretty large order, so please come to the rescue, Guild Sisters, and remember that the aspect is not the best.

Your perplexed HEATHER.

PS. I should have said that it is about eight feet high.

Daisy's Solution.

I should not cover it at all, but fill the space in front with bushes of variegated holly, white and golden, so as to have always something cheerful to look at from the terrace above. Of course, you would not plant them very closely, so you could have an annual climber, Japanese hop, or tall nasturtiums trained up the fence till the hollies grew, and something creeping below them. That pretty *Campanula glomerata* spreads beautifully under holly as I've proved.

DAISY.

Rosemary's Solution.

I thought for a moment of Miss Jekyll's favourite combination of Guelder rose and Montana clematis, but you would have thought of that for yourself, if it had been practicable. Naturally you will not want large-leaved ivy again, but what I would suggest to begin with would be the putting in of a great

many cuttings of the small-leaved kind, and the five-pointed ivy which grows on your porch, with the addition of some roots of the variegated sorts, whichever you fancy. Don't make the soil too good, or the variegation disappears, so I am told. In the spring I would put in some late-flowered clematis, flammula for choice, and train it to run along the upper part of the fence. As the ivies will take some time to grow, you might use the little border for Michaelmas daisies, tying the tall ones to wires run along the fence so as to spread them out. I often wish for space to do that.

ROSEMARY.

Violet's Solution.

Your superfluous virtue so took away my breath that I can only think of one thing for the fence, so my plan has at least the merit of simplicity! I should use the fence for such roses as Félicité et Perpetué, Flora, Bennett's Seedling, or Dundee Rambler, which are not fussy as to aspect. Besides your fence gets a good deal of overhead light, so they ought to be all right. I saw somewhere lately the small self-clinging ampelopsis on a wall under a climbing rose, and it looked pretty where the rose straggled a bit. I'm not so "simple" as I thought after all.

VIOLET.

Heather's Answer.

My Daisy, you have certainly given me an answer on the large scale, and the shining hollies all in a row, as seen from the terrace, were very attractive, but alas, there would not be room for them if they grew tall enough to hide the fence, and the boys will not stand it bare very long. But I can use the campanula to great advantage in another place, it is such a blessing to have something which will do under bushes. After wavering between the other two plans, I think that Rosemary's will suit me best, because it will be such a pleasant change to have something pretty in autumn in that part of the garden, and the small ivies will make a permanent covering in time. But now I think of it, there would be room for some of Violet's ampelopsis too, and the changing leaves would be lovely with the clematis. Thanks to you all.

HEATHER.

A LETTER FROM DAISY

WHILE SHE AND HEATHER WERE STAYING WITH
VIOLET

IT is too bad, dear Rosemary, that you too cannot be here with your Guild Sisters, though indeed it was a wonderful chance that Heather and I could both leave home just now, but my good man had to be away on business, and Heather was free for the moment, so we could not resist the pleasure of coming together. It is delightful to see Violet really well again ; she has to be a little careful of her foot, and not strain it by walking too far, but as that only means more playing about in the garden, it does no great harm. There are many things I should like to tell you about her plants and flowers, but Heather insists that I should write down a little scene which took place in the garden yesterday, though I don't believe I can do it properly. To begin with, you must understand that while we were sitting out in the shade, one of Violet's neighbours, a certain Mrs. Loader, came to call and had a friend (what was that woman's name, Heather ? oh, Renton) Mrs. Renton with her. They were brought out to where we were

sitting, and we endeavoured to help Violet with the entertaining, but they were not the easiest in the world to get on with. Heather says I sniffed at them, but it isn't true. After a bit, they began to talk about the garden, and Violet proposed to take them round it. I didn't hear all that passed, as I went in to fetch my parasol, but when I joined the party, Mrs. Renton was admiring very volubly, but I think quite sincerely, and Mrs. Loader was looking distinctly cross, and talking to Heather in a queer, stiff sort of way,—I couldn't think what ailed the woman. I could see that Violet was a little amused with Mrs. Renton's enthusiasm, but she was cutting some roses for her, and being as charming as usual. Mrs. Renton turned round to me. "I'd no idea it was anything like this," she said, waving her hands all round the garden, "do tell me, is it really as pretty in the springtime?" Remembering the clouds of daffodils which Violet has collected with such care, I could conscientiously assure her that it was quite as pretty then.

"Well, Mr. Loader said it was a picture last April, didn't he, Elizabeth?"

"I can't tell you," snapped Mrs. Loader, just as if her thin lips were scissors cutting the words off. Apparently the reference to her husband ruffled her.

"There's nothing out of the way in having a

pretty spring garden," Violet said gently ; " it's easy enough, anybody could do it."

" *Could* they ? " asked Mrs. Renton ; " why don't they, then ? " and I thought she looked a trifle maliciously at her friend.

" Well, a good many people do. I know plenty of charming spring gardens," Violet answered, " and why should anybody else have what they do not happen to fancy ? "

Mrs. Loader looked rather less snappy.

" I must say," she began (don't you hate people who always say that, when there isn't the least necessity for them to speak at all ?), " I must say that it seems to me rather unnecessary to provide a quantity of flowers just when they are most likely to be destroyed by bad weather."

Heather interposed, " It's not quite such a risky affair as that, Mrs. Loader ; I've had my daffodils quite buried in snow, and seen them come out as fresh as possible after it. Have you looked at these hollyhocks ? "

This made a little diversion, and I assure you they were exceedingly well worth looking at, for they happen to be Reg.'s special hobby, and you could not see more beautiful shades anywhere.

" I suppose," Mrs. Loader said solemnly to Violet, " you have to be very careful to prevent people from copying you ? "

For once Violet was puzzled. "Do you mean stealing my plants?" she said doubtfully. "I have not had much to complain of in that way."

"No, I mean copying," said Mrs. Loader in a superior sort of tone. "I always understood that people who go in for having fine gardens are mortally afraid of other gardeners having the same plants, or making the same kind of beds."

Heather and I both began to feel a little angry, for there was something nasty in the way this was said, but Violet only laughed.

"Oh dear, no," she said, "that's an exploded idea. It's very dull to see one garden the copy of another, but otherwise, the more people have good plants, the better. I am always getting hints from my friends' gardens and gardeners, and I'm delighted when they can get any help from mine."

"So you might as well have something of this sort, Elizabeth," said the irrepressible Mrs. Renton, pointing to the hollyhocks. Mrs. Loader gave her a look as if she could have withered her.

"No, thank you, Mrs. Renton," she said, more superior than ever, "I do not find it at all necessary to alter my arrangements, nor could I reconcile it to my conscience to throw away any more money on the garden than having it planted for the summer costs me already!"

This outburst fairly took my breath away—one

isn't used to seeing a woman lose her temper in that fashion—and even Mrs. Renton, who had brought it down on herself, looked startled, but before the pause had time to grow awkward, Violet was saying, in the coolest, most unruffled voice, “A garden depends as much on time and trouble as on actual money, if you spare in one way, you have to spend in the other, which is only fair.”

“What do you mean?” said Mrs. Loader bluntly enough, but I think she was a little ashamed of herself.

“Well, for instance,” Violet said, “I admit that my husband and I take a great deal of trouble and spend a good deal of time over our garden, because we are fond of it, and like to do so, but I should doubt whether we really lay out more money in buying plants every year than you do.”

“That can't be possible,” ejaculated Mrs. Loader, and it was lucky that we had got back to the seats, for she was so much astonished that she tumbled into one.

“Why not?” Violet asked smiling, as she also sat down.

“Why, because—because look at the numbers you have.”

“And all the year round too,” added Mrs. Renton.

“That is partly the reason,” said Violet—“I mean, that I seldom buy a plant which is only to

last one season, and so I haven't to renew the plants every year."

"Well," said Mrs. Loader in the most unconvinced tone possible, "you have to get something else, that's not all you want."

"Ah, but then I get a great deal without paying any more for it," Violet answered. "It's quite simple. If I buy ten shillings' worth of hardy plants (not annuals, of course), by the next year they will have grown bigger, and if I want any more of that sort, I can generally multiply them by taking cuttings or dividing them, and so on. For example, that long edging of white pinks down there, all came from about half a dozen plants divided year after year till the space was filled."

Mrs. Renton interrupted. "But can you do that with everything? What about bulbs now?"

"Some bulbs increase only too fast," Violet answered, "but with many things, all you want is that they shall grow into handsome plants, and fill the space allotted to them, improving from year to year. But if I spend my ten shillings on tender plants, such as geraniums, and they have to be cleared out when the frost comes, naturally the beds are empty the next summer, and the whole thing has to be done over again, leaving me nothing to show for my money."

"I see," said Mrs. Renton, "you get up your stock by degrees. Still, the difference between filling a

few beds and keeping your large borders going seems to me rather big, even if your plants do last."

"That's quite true," Heather put in, "but you must not leave the annuals out of count for filling up, and there are so many of them besides the mignonette and sweet peas which everybody likes to have."

"Do you save your own seeds, then?" asked Mrs. Renton.

"Only if I want to sow the seed while it is quite fresh," Violet told her. "When you can buy eighty sweet peas for a penny, it really is not worth while to save one's own. But many plants sow themselves, and those seedlings are very useful. I do keep a few tender and some half-hardy things over the winter in my small greenhouse, and increase them for the summer, but they do not go far towards filling the garden. Raising other things besides annuals from seed is of much more help."

"What kind of things?" Mrs. Loader asked somewhat incredulously.

"Well, those hollyhocks, to begin with," said Violet. "I think that bed cost threepence, and the pansies beyond them were all pennyworths, so you see that the amount which I need to spend in buying plants becomes reduced."

"But—but," Mrs. Loader almost stammered,



EDGING OF WHITE PINKS

“ you must do some proper—that is, what becomes of your regular bedding out ? ”

Violet smiled. “ If bedding out means filling empty beds with half-tender plants, I don’t do any,” she said ; “ I can quite believe what you say about your summer garden being expensive, it must certainly be so, for if I remember rightly, you have several large beds to fill, and I have noticed that you always have good plants, not little bits, and all that means considerable expense. But on the other hand it must be a great saving of trouble to you, and there is no reason that you should not please yourself in the matter.”

Mrs. Loader looked disconcerted, as if this were not at all the position that she had meant to take up, and Mrs. Renton said quite slyly to Violet, “ I begin to think that instead of buying plants, you must have more than you know what to do with.”

This Violet denied. “ There are always things which one must buy, and a good many of them,” she said, “ and then, it is pleasant to have some surplus plants to exchange with friends.”

“ To say nothing of those you give away,” I could not help saying.

“ Superfluities not worth mentioning,” Violet said ; “ besides, one must give away for luck.”

“ *Luck!* ” snorted Mrs. Loader.

“ Oh yes,” Violet calmly went on, “ one of our

chief authorities has laid it down that no garden thrives unless plenty is given out of it, and I am quite sure that it is true."

"And I am quite sure that you practise it," said Mrs. Renton looking at her roses. Then Violet began to ask Mrs. Loader about her daughter's school, and the garden subject dropped, and the visitors soon afterwards went away.

Later, when we were talking over the episode, Violet told us that the Loaders have plenty of money, and spend it freely, though in a stupid sort of way, so there was no sense in Mrs. Loader's burst of economy. Violet says she does not so much mind being attacked, but she does not see why the woman should give herself such airs, if she *has* got the stiffest and dullest garden in the place! Heather has erected a theory that Mr. Loader was unguarded in his admiration of Violet's flowers, and that Mrs. Loader considered this a reflection on her own ways, and was sore on the point. What do you think? We wish you were here to say.

DAISY.

Postscript by Heather.

Would you think well of admitting my little cousin Lily to the Guild? She would start with a fine fund of gratitude to her President, as she says you helped her so much with her garden work. I should be so glad if we could encourage the child

(though she really is not a child any more) as I am sometimes anxious about her health, and she has been much stronger since she took charge of the garden. Her experiences would be a variety on ours, as she is much more in a town. Violet and Daisy will take her on trust from you and me.

HEATHER.

Rosemary's Answer.

First tell Heather that I shall be very glad to have Lily in the Guild. She has all the makings of a good gardener, and I thought she had done wonders with her pretty little garden the last time I saw it. She strikes me as unusually observant, and if she likes to "pay her footing" among us by writing a paper, I should be glad to have it.

Your garden scene amused me very much. I could imagine it perfectly, as I remember Mrs. Loader quite well, the sort of woman who is essentially common-minded, and would be the same wherever you put her.

I should think there might be a good deal in Heather's theory, and if so, Mrs. Renton's proddings were not in the best taste. But there is another point which interests me in the matter—Mrs. Loader seems to be a survival, a degenerate survival of something which I thought had wholly vanished. I remember some dear old friends of my mother's, who

had been brought up in the idea that it was distinctly childish, even contemptible, to care much about pretty things, or making your surroundings pleasant. The same idea is expressed in Mrs. Gaskell's *Lady Ludlow*, when the dear old lady "considered that the use of coloured threads or worsted was only fit to amuse children; but that grown women ought to restrict their pleasure in sewing to making small and delicate stitches." My old friends would not have agreed to that in words, but they never got quite rid of the cramping principle. However, being people of refined minds, the main effect noticeable in their surroundings was a certain bareness and austerity not exactly unpleasing. But they let themselves go in the garden, they were not responsible for that beauty, so they enjoyed it to the full, and if their principles had any effect at all, it was only as a gentle restraint on hankerings after new fashions and changes. Therefore their dear, really old-fashioned garden was the most charming I ever saw. But another generation twisted the principle round, and asserted that there was something meritorious in not caring whether your things were pretty or ugly, which led straight to accepting whatever the custom of the day prescribed, and the more conventional you were, the better you were pleased with yourself. Mrs. Loader sees that Violet is not conventional in her garden practice,

therefore she thinks she may look down on her, and would like to prove her wildly extravagant. But Mrs. Loader is a survival, she represents the conventions of the day before yesterday, which perhaps is a good thing, for just consider what would be the result of her attempting to follow present-day fashions without a grain of real interest in them. Now she is only stiff and dull in her gardening, then she would be pretentious. It probably now and then dawns on her that other people do not share her prejudices, and then self-conceit makes her irritable and rude.

Thinking about the question of expenses, I wonder what we should each consider our principle item? Wasn't it an American girl who said the dearest things in housekeeping were butter and experience? We should all agree in the garden as regards experience, it is a costly article in more than money, but what corresponds to butter? Time has been when *I* should have answered "Labour," but now I think manure (including lawn sand) comes heaviest on my exchequer.

Now while you three are together, will you give me a collective solution of a small problem, instead of each writing a separate one? You know this house has no claim to regularity, and I like it all the better for that. You may also remember that on the southern side there are projecting windows which

have between them what Heather calls her Passion-flower Shrine, because she planted a young passion flower there, which now runs rampant over the whole wall. That is all very well, but it has struck me lately that this recess, which is the best sheltered and sunniest place about the house, is wasted to some extent on the present occupants. The wall plants are right enough, roses, verbenas, and so forth, but the hardy fuchsias, though good in themselves and most flourishing, are taking up too much of this choice spot. It is quite satisfactory in the spring, as there are plenty of Many-flowered Narcissus, and blue and white hyacinths which are never disturbed, and go on in beauty from year to year, contrary to the usual idea of them, also crocuses in front, and my beloved little winter cyclamens seeding themselves all over the place. But there are too many Peruvian Scillas which would do as well elsewhere, and their big leaves do harbour snails most dreadfully. If I move them and the fuchsias, there will be a space, call it roughly seven feet square, to be filled up, and the problem is what shall it be filled with? I like to leave room for some heliotrope near the front, as the scent comes in at the windows, and I should not mind plunging one or two half tropical-looking plants for the summer, they seem to suit a sunny place, but it must not be forlorn in winter either. So give me your views.

ROSEMARY.

The Joint Solution written out by Violet.

We talked a great deal over your problem, partly because your mentioning the plants to be plunged suggested something of a new idea, supposing there were space and means to carry it out. Could one have subtropical and temperate gardens, as one has greenhouses? Of course, it would have to be very well done to succeed, but we amused ourselves trying to think it out. We got this far, that in such a warm corner as yours it would be worth while to emphasize the fact that it was a happy home for things which would not thrive in the general garden, and that this would give it a distinct character.

We thought of more things than you could possibly have room for, but you can choose out of them. One thing we agreed on for the background was a *Choisya*, partly because it meets your requirements of looking well in winter; *Veronicas* would do that too, but they would soon grow too large, and I gather that you don't want the recess too much stuffed up. Then we suggest *Chimney Campanulas*, *Pancratium illyricum*, *Belladonna amaryllis*, Sweet Tobacco, (it grows so well in a warm place), *Ixia*, umbellatum lilies, *Heliotrope* as you say, *Cannas* and perhaps auratum lilies to plunge. How even a selection from these is to be got in among your dear bulbs is a puzzle we decline to touch, but I'll never forgive you if those adorable *cyclamens* get spoilt.

Heather suggests that one of her favourite "winter carpets" of arabis or forget-me-not would prevent any bareness.

(Signed for the others) VIOLET.

Rosemary's Reply.

I am not sure that parts of gardens arranged as you propose would really be satisfactory. Of course, aspect does influence one's choice of plants a good deal, and I think something might be done in a large garden, where there were decided differences of temperature, in the way of selecting plants which thrive much better in one part than another. This would make variety and be interesting, but we must remember that the advantage of a temperate climate is that the majority of our plants are not too particular.

Thanks for the solution. I quite agree about the Choisya, and perhaps the amaryllis, and there is only the difficulty of choice about the rest. Cannas certainly, but I am not quite decided as to the remainder. Heather might tell me more about winter carpets, if she has time.

Yours affectionately,

ROSEMARY.

MY NEIGHBOURS' GARDENS

BY LILY

I WONDER whether my much-respected Guild Sisters have ever been through the phase which sometimes oppresses me, when I feel not only how much I don't know about the garden, but also the difficulty of keeping hold of any knowledge that I may pick up unless I can put it into practice immediately. So much that one reads slips away so fast, and even when people tell one things, they do not remain as accurately as might be wished. It often reminds me of what our clever German mistress used to say when we got fogged over rules in grammar, "apply them, my good children, apply them," but it is not always so easy to apply our garden rules. So it much consoled me to come across some advice given by a wise man to friends living near London, to the effect that the most valuable lessons they could learn were to be gathered from other people's gardens, as seen from the suburban trains, though, for the most part, they would learn what *not* to do. Now, substituting the streets and roads about here for the suburbs, I thought this would suit me very well,

especially as I could see many more details in walking past the gardens, even without staring too much, than these people could possibly do whizzing by in a train. I have now tried the plan for some time, and I certainly find it very helpful, for it shows me how many things succeed or fail in practice, which I, so far, have only known in theory. And it is convenient, too, that the gardens which you wouldn't have at a gift, are almost as useful as the good ones, because you have the interest of puzzling out why they are wrong, and what could be put in or left out to improve them, and it does make things stick in your head. Of course, I may be quite mistaken heaps of times; still, looking in this way does open one's eyes, and really most of the gardens have some points of interest some time or other. I have often heard this said of cottage gardens, and no doubt it is true, and next time I have a chance to go into the country I hope to learn a great deal, but perhaps under present circumstances these town gardens are more useful to me. Which reminds me, can nobody invent a word to describe the sort of garden I mean? "Town garden" suggests an enclosure behind some dignified old town house; "villa garden" sounds horrid, and does not mean anything in particular; "small town house garden" is too clumsy, and you don't know whether the town, or the house, or the garden is the small thing. I want

something to express the hundreds of gardens of various sizes which lie round an old town, such as this, bordering all the roads, and gradually melting away into the country. People talk as if there were nothing but public gardens, cottage gardens, and those belonging to country houses, and they seem to think that one only lives in a "villa" so-called from natural depravity.

However, to come back to my object-lessons, there certainly are some awful warnings in these parts. Most of our houses are built of red brick, by no means bad in colour when it has weathered a little, but the persistency with which the inhabitants plant against their walls roses of that peculiar blue red, like Cheshunt Hybrid when it is going off, which swears at the bricks the whole summer, is only equalled by the way in which they cherish pink hyacinths and azaleas in the windows in winter. And oh, the cold blue-pink geraniums they put in their window-boxes! Then the waste of space in many of the gardens is vexing; so often a lot of room is taken up by the dullest of shrubs, and that dreadful privet—perhaps I am prejudiced about that, for the smell of the flowers nearly makes me sick—but why should there be such a quantity of it, even if it is cheap? Still, one learns something, even when one is vexed, and I do see now that there are difficulties in arranging a small garden with a road or

street just outside it, which a country dweller would never think of.

You know the common sort of garden in a street—a low wall, a bit of railing atop, an iron gate, and a little square of garden inside—well, I've found out why there is often a stupid little hedge, generally privet, inside the railing. It is just to prevent things being thrown in! The passer-by seems to consider a garden as a rubbish shoot, and with a most perverted sense of order drops his rubbish inside the wall instead of leaving it in the street, where at least the dustman would clear it away. Our next-door neighbour has a piece of wall with a kind of ornamental perforation near the top of it, and she keeps a list of the queer things which have been put through the holes, ranging from a dead cat wrapped in newspaper to a broken bicycle lamp and a long broom! But the thing which she really minds is when somebody deliberately tears up a letter, and drops the little bits into her garden, as then *she* has to pick them up, they look so untidy! So one sees the sense of the little hedge; but I think a more effectual protection would be wire netting on the railing, with a good thorny sweetbrier trained along it.

There is a short row of these small street gardens on each side of the road which leads from us to the shops, so I pass them very often, and I find it very

interesting to notice the different ways in which they are treated. Even one in front of an empty house can suggest something, for there may be some plant flourishing gaily, in spite of long neglect. One of these gardens is just kept grimly tidy, with only a few stupid little bushes in it; another has more weeds than anything else, and another is stuffed with plants to bursting point. I can't help fancying things about the owners, too. One house, I am sure, belongs to a woman who loves flowers, and likes to do things very well, but is too poor to spend much on her garden, so the main bed, which occupies most of the space, is filled with a very well-chosen and well-grown set of Tom Thumb nasturtiums, looking exceedingly pretty and a standing example to me of the advantage of doing one thing really thoroughly, which only an inveterate love of trying experiments keeps me from following. Another house belongs to a plumber, for his plate is on the door, and I suspect him of having a snug little greenhouse, and perhaps a frame or two in his rear premises, because his garden is always full of pretty things, some of which are carefully removed as winter comes on. In the spring his primroses, well protected with cocoa fibre, are a charming spectacle. Another garden excites my envy, because Madonna lilies grow and flourish in what I should have thought was an impos-

sible place, the narrowest little strip between the wall and a paved path, in very full sun.

When the spring bulbs begin to come out, it often strikes me, both in these tiny gardens and other more extensive ones, what a pity it is that people will spoil the effect by mixing different kinds together. Tulips and hyacinths never seem to look right in a bed together, and when a few daffodils are peppered about among them they are completely ruined. Their shapes, so beautiful alone, don't seem to harmonize, and as for colour, some of my neighbours appear to be always impelled by an evil fate to combine red and yellow tulips, that fierce pink hyacinth so painfully common, and strong yellow daffodils, with disastrous results. I have seen Poet's narcissus and deep red tulips look well enough in company, but the other sort of combination is much the most common, and probably comes from buying cheap mixed bulbs. It does not seem easy to arrange these flowers well in a small space, such as the gardens I have been speaking of, as even when the colour is good, and the kinds are kept separate, they usually stand in straight rows, and positively shout at you that they are all going to be pulled up by and by, and something else put in, and it makes me feel so hurried and unrestful. Wallflowers, too, dear delightful wallflowers, I do hate to see them set out in a

phalanx, all the same size just as if they were cabbages, and to know that they will be torn up and thrown away as soon as their beauty is over. I know they won't last for ever, and they get straggly in the end, but there are some gardens here where they grow on steep banks and such places, and look as natural as if they were in a castle wall. I suppose old ones are abstracted, and new seedlings come up, but you never see wholesale clearances.

Not far off there is a row of better-class small houses which have not been very long built, and therefore I have watched their little front gardens from their start. There are larger pieces of ground behind the houses, I believe, but these are not visible to the public. The front bits are very small, as a tiled path to the main door has been taken off in each case, and my interest is in seeing how the piece remaining at the side has been dealt with. Mostly there is a patch of grass with a tiny diamond-shaped bed in the middle of it, and a narrow border under the house wall. Sometimes there is gravel instead of grass, and one despairing householder has asphalted everything except the little border. The lady of Number One was a great comfort to me when she got her place in order, for she evidently bore the somewhat fierce red of the new brick walls continually in mind, and on one side of the large

window she planted a quick growing rose, with white flowers faintly tinted with yellow—I don't know the name, but it was very pretty. On the other side she had a lovely double white clematis, of the large-flowered kind, and the little border below was full of mauve and white violas. She had no bed in the grass, but there must have been a border just inside the wall, a solid one which divided the garden from the street, for the tips of a flourishing row of mixed sweet peas peeped over it. Now as the little beds in several of the other gardens were filled with Henry Jacoby geraniums, and it was a hot summer, you can imagine how refreshing Number One's cool whites and mauves were to look at.

Another house further on was interesting because the whole thing had evidently been thought out. The owner clearly liked permanent plants, and began with silver ivy on the house, which had a good effect. There was no grass, and the planting was mainly done with small shrubs, foliage plants, and ferns, with a few flowers to lighten it up. I fancied the owner might be a busy man, with not much time to spare for his garden, and if that were true, it was an excellent arrangement, for it was always neat, pretty, and unconventional. But now I see a flaw in it, the pretty little shrubs are beginning to get too big, and will soon smother up

the place, and how could anybody be so misguided as to plant a yew tree just under the ground-floor bow window? I shall be curious to see how this difficulty is met by my unknown neighbour.

There is a funny contrast to this garden in a back street not far off, where there are some of those foolish little houses with ladderlike steps up to the front door, and about a yard of ground between them and the footpath. I don't know whether the owner of one of these has any connexion with a nursery garden or not, but the scrap of space is nearly blocked with queerly painted boxes full of geraniums, fuchsias, and other greenhouse plants, the window-sills the same, the front of the house hung with rubbishy little shelves and baskets holding more plants, and large pots in each corner of all the ridiculous steps! It always makes me laugh when I pass it, but the misdirected energy of the whole thing is a little pathetic, too, somehow.

In all my spyings round, I do not find traces of what Cousin Heather calls " garden souls " as often as I should like to do. Perhaps they live more tucked away in the back gardens which one does not see unless one happens to know the people. It was in one of these hidden gardens that I saw the quaintest, prettiest spring sight possible. A Bee's crocus garden! There were two or three hives on a low stand or bench, in a very sunny corner, and

just in front of them a little bed had been cut out, exactly the same length and width as the stand, and somehow suggesting a front yard to a doll's house. But it was filled as full as possible with mixed crocuses, all opening wide to the sun, and the bees were simply revelling in them, plunging down into the cups and coming out extremely yellow with pollen to make their bee-bread. It was such a pretty sight, I didn't like leaving them at all.

I have often found that when I have penetrated to the back garden, it is much more interesting than the front one, but it seems as if a real garden soul ought to be the same back and front. Now and then I seem to catch sight of one, sometimes in the little gardens on the roads leading out into the country, of which I have seen more lately than usual, because a friend of ours, Miss Lawley, has been chartering me to drive her pony carriage for her. She cannot walk much, and likes to be out a great deal, and so whisks about everywhere in this trap, with a small boy in attendance; but she hurt her wrist a while ago, and therefore I go 'out with her as often as I can, and I see many varieties of gardens that way. I am sure I saw a "soul" in a tiny bit of cottage garden one day. She looked quite old, and had a dear wrinkled face, with bright twinkling eyes in it, but there was a thick wreath

of pink convolvulus growing beside her door, and she was looking at it as if she saw whole worlds of beauty in every bell !

But the soul I'm surest of lives more in the town, and her garden is bewitching because you feel that somebody loves every single thing that is in it. I've seen her working a good deal harder than I can get our man to work, though she is not at all young, and I call her the Elderly Lady. I get some fresh idea each time I pass her house, and the other day I got something else.

Miss Lawley was calling on somebody near by, and I had taken the pony into the shade just outside the Elderly Lady's garden, and was sitting in the carriage waiting for the call to be over, when I heard voices inside the garden, which, by the way, is a little above the road, and very visible from it. Two ladies were walking to and fro, and talking quite audibly, but as they could see me just as plainly as I could see them, it did not seem necessary to move out into the sun. The Elderly Lady was one of them, and the other appeared to be a visitor ; she was in the middle of a sentence when I first noticed them, something like this—"really the new piece hardly shows. Now couldn't you get your landlord to raise this wall too ? "

" I should be very sorry if he did anything of the sort," said the Elderly Lady (she speaks rather

slowly and deliberately), "it would take away so much of the light, and I can't spare it."

The Visitor : "Oh, but my dear, just consider how little privacy you have, even less than there used to be, at least at this end, I think."

Elderly Lady : "Yes, you're quite right. There used to be some huge old privets here, which smothered this corner, and the garden and I have breathed much easier since I cut them down." (I *knew* she was a kindred soul.)

Visitor : "But don't you dislike having it so exposed that everybody can see you working?"

Elderly Lady : "Now why should I mind that? It wouldn't be convenient to have people looking straight into one's rooms, but privacy in the open air always seems a funny idea to me. I shouldn't fancy watching me would amuse anybody in the least, but it wouldn't hurt me, unless (with a comic little change in her voice) my garden bonnet had got very untidy." It was just like an old-fashioned sunbonnet, only made of silk, and extremely becoming! I lost the beginning of the Visitor's next sentence by looking at it.

Visitor, with his elbows on the wall, and a pipe in his mouth. "You can't like that sort of thing."

Elderly Lady : "But I do like it, I like it very much! I believe I have seen the man you speak of, who looks as if he had little enough to enjoy



WHAT A BACK GARDEN MAY BE

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in his life, and if the poor fellow can have a few minutes' innocent pleasure in gazing at my flowers, I am very glad that he should take it."

Visitor : " Well, but after all, most people seem to think "—here they took a longer turn, and when they came back, the Elderly Lady was saying—" It all depends on what you are used to. I've never had one of these walled gardens, and though the walls would be delightful for fruit trees, I think the garden itself would seem a little dull and lonesome."

Visitor : " Does it really amuse you to see people going along a road ? "

Elderly Lady : " There's a certain sense of company in it, though I don't often stop to look at them ; but it does interest me to see them looking in, and noticing anything that happens to be in beauty just then. I should miss my wayfarers very much. And I like to set things so that they can see them properly, if I can do it without hurting the plants."

Visitor : " I should think you would get a great many stolen, if you show them off like that."

Elderly Lady : " No, that very seldom happens, and I've often been surprised at it, as it would be quite easy. Once or twice an early tea rose has been taken off the house—I'm told they are always easy to sell—but that's not much in all these years.

Besides, the people who take an interest in the garden are not that sort."

Visitor : " But how can you possibly know that ? "

Elderly Lady : " Oh, one can see by the look of them, and by hearing their remarks, which are often very funny, when they don't notice that any one is within hearing. I remember a passing workman gazing across the garden, and saying, ' *There's* violets,' with great delight, only they happened to be a bunch of purple crocuses ! Sometimes I have quite interesting little conversations across the bushes."

Visitor (bristling up) : " Well really, I don't think you should let people take such liberties—— "

Elderly Lady : " But they don't, it is generally only asking civilly what the name of a flower is, or telling me that they like to see them. Once a nice young school teacher asked me very shyly if I could spare her some of the spoilt crocuses, as she had to give a lesson on them, and hers were all faded and useless ? Of course, I was delighted to give her as many as she would take, and she often comes now for specimens to show the children ; it is a great pleasure to me. Then one morning in summer a dear old man told me most politely, ' Your garden is a perfect picture, Ma'am ; I walk round every Sunday to look at it.' I don't think anything ever pleased me more."

Visitor : " Well, that *was* rather nice."

Elderly Lady : " Then there are the children. When they put their little rosy faces through the openings in the gate, they are sweeter than anything inside, and it is so pretty to see them held up to look over the wall at the flowers, that I wouldn't have it an inch higher on any account. If there are plenty of people to have some pleasure out of the garden, it seems more worth while to work at it, you know."

" You never did care to keep things to yourself," said the Visitor, quite affectionately, as they moved away towards the house, and Miss Lawley appeared in the distance.

I wrote this down because it helped me with something which had puzzled me, trying to reconcile what our President said about having our gardens as *we* liked them, and not according to outsiders' notions, with the feeling that outsiders counted for something too. But the Elderly Lady's way of considering the *pleasure* of the passer-by seemed to put the matter in a fresh light, and of course the same idea would apply to visitors to the garden as well. I suppose that is why one hates to take some people into the garden, while one would like to keep others in it as permanently as a rose-bush ! It really gives these pleasure, while the others stare at the things one loves best as if

they were bits of stair carpet, and they wondered you didn't have it of better quality. It never struck me before that my Guild Sisters must often suffer a great deal in this way, and I hope they have a number of understanding friends to make up for it.

Any way my Elderly Lady gave me more pleasure than she knew of, and I should like to tell her so.

LILY.

The Guild Sisters unanimously request Lily to endeavour to make friends with the Elderly Lady.

From Daisy.

As regards the largest item of expenditure, I think making alterations ranks highest with us at present, as that means not only extra labour, but also buying a good many large plants, shrubs, for instance, that one can't very well rear for oneself. Another year would be different, at least, I hope so.

DAISY.

From Violet.

I've come to the conclusion that the grass is the most costly thing in the garden, what with fertilizers and manure, and the labour in keeping it in order. If Mrs. Loader had only known, she might have had me there, with much more effect.

VIOLET.

From Heather.

My most ruinous expense is wire netting to keep out the rabbits, and it does not always succeed either, alas !

HEATHER.

THE GARDEN IN WINTER

BY HEATHER

DEAR SISTERS,—

My worst enemy will not accuse me of fidgetty tidiness (Violet murmurs, “nor of any other kind, either,” but that is her impertinence), though I hold that the season makes a great difference in this matter. For half, nay three-quarters of the year tidiness can easily be an overrated virtue; it should not force itself upon your notice as the first thing to be remarked. Spring flowers have mostly a certain trimness of growth, with all their lavish outpouring of bloom, which causes any attempt to make them tidier to seem quite a work of supererogation. And who wants tidiness in the summer garden when everything is in full growth and luxuriance, and all that is required is fair play all round, so that one plant shall not smother another? This may mean a good deal of work, and weeds must be kept under, and spent blossoms removed, but it ought to be done unobtrusively, so that nobody should think about it, sliding in the necessary changes for autumn beauty without

leaving unsightly gaps, or making a fuss. There is one result of the bedding-out system (not nearly so generally disused as is often asserted) which is seldom recognized—the effect produced on people at large, by never seeing a summer flowering plant, saving a few annuals, growing in a natural way. The common bedding plants, geraniums, etc., grown from cuttings, and thrown away after a few months, of course never had a chance of becoming full grown, even those kept through the winter would be cut down in spring to make fresh cuttings. Neither could the standard roses, which were the rule during the prevalence of the system, be considered as naturally growing plants. The consequence was that anything free growing or luxuriant came to be thought unfit for garden purposes, a naturally growing plant, which could not be set up in a row, was denounced as an untidy one, and this feeling is still more common than might be supposed. I don't doubt that any one who has to advise on garden planning and the choice of plants, could tell many funny tales about this, though perhaps, few people are as honest as my beloved nephew, who owned that he would like the buttercups and daisies in the grass well enough, if they would only grow in straight lines !

This false standard for the garden plants led naturally to encouragement of the mechanical ways

which are the vice of unintelligent gardeners, professional or otherwise, anything which could be done by routine became all important, and garden order came down to the bare, scraped look, which we all know too well, if ever one of these "broom and basket" people gets loose among our borders, without a vigilant supervisor after him. Far be it from me, however, to run down the working gardener indiscriminately, or the jobbing one either, who is often a good fellow, according to his lights, and I think we might bear more in mind that it is much harder to group plants well than to plant them in rows, much harder to train a shoot gracefully than to chop it short, much harder to give a careful top-dressing than to dig and slash about among tender roots, and revise our expectations accordingly. Yet why *should* he have such an unbridled love for dead wood in our roses that he always cuts the young growth by preference?

But while I think that much time and trouble is wasted in needless tidiness through the best part of the year, it is different when we come to winter. I am sure that none of our Guild Sisters will give in to the pestilent heresy that winter is a dead, blank time in the garden, whoever started that idea was no true gardener. That we get some ice and snow most winters, is quite true, and probably we should do badly without them, but how

often does a really long frost come ? The incessant grumbling about the changeableness of the weather proves my point, and I, for one, am truly thankful for the breaks and changes which keep growth going on all the time for any one who chooses to look for it, and provides us with as much work to do as there is daylight for, whenever the milder days come. Of course, the charm of the winter garden must be quite different from the glowing beauty of the summer one, and we have to prepare for it even more carefully. In summer we look for luxuriance and vigour, in winter we should see order, comfort, the memory of the past, and the promise of the future.

Here I must pause to confess that I have never been able to accept the cult of the dead stalk, in which many persons of authority find so much beauty, that is, as far as the garden is concerned. The withered bents on the hillside, the close-packed bracken in the wood, have real charms of colour, and suggest pleasant ideas as to the shelter for wild little creatures among their roots, but dead Michaelmas daisy stalks, with rags of blackened leaves fluttering dismally from them, give me no sort of pleasure.

“Heavily hangs the hollyhock” ;

but it doesn't, nor the tiger-lily either, unless their

stalks are actually broken in two, and the splendidly built stems of the hollyhock, and the tough canes of the lily take a great deal of breaking. Moreover, what Tennyson, usually most accurate in such matters, could have meant by suggesting that there would be a vestige of either of these blossoms at the end of the year, no one has ever been able to explain. Perhaps, as the Song is among the earlier poems, he wrote it long before he had a garden of his own to watch all the year round, and the memory of an autumn scene became confused in date with that of a winter one. That, however, is a digression.

I quite admit that it does not do to be in too great a hurry to cut things down, and certainly not too closely, as the old stalks often protect from frost, but when the fresh growth is already showing strongly, as is the case in autumn with Madonna lilies, the old stems are better away. But when all dead stuff is cleared out, and broken branches picked up, and withered leaves either swept off for leaf-mould or making comfortable mulches over tender roots, or being pulled under ground by that much undervalued helper, "my Lady Worm," when all the grass edges are trimmed close and sharp, when edging plants are neatly clipped, when rubbishy corners and hiding-places for snails have been overhauled, when everything which wants it has got a stick, or a tie, or a stay, or a winter

blanket, then the garden looks as cheerful, and ready for all emergencies as a little child running to school in a red cloak. I am bound to admit that by the time all this is done, the spring may not be very far off, especially with many trees and bushes about, for then every storm brings down a fresh supply of sticks and twigs to be tidied away.

Though we speak of winter work as distinct from that of autumn, it is really more the weather than actual dates which divides them, for we may get a heavy snowstorm early in November, which suspends all work for the time, and afterwards we may go on planting and moving things up to Christmas, or even beyond it, though this is rather a risk. January is apt to be the least occupied month in the year, because even when the weather is open, the ground is often too wet to be meddled with. Still, odds and ends of work are always presenting themselves: after snow, bushes have to be looked over to see whether any branches are broken, and after frost, many things need to be pressed back into the ground, and weeds of grass have a tiresome way of appearing in the borders, and there are always the irrepressible daisies coming up in the lawn.

But there is not only work to be done, but much to be enjoyed in the garden in winter, and there is beauty as well as the comfortable orderliness which has been spoken of. Everybody will not admit

this, and it is curious to find such an ardent gardener as the late Dean Hole telling us seriously that there can be no real winter garden, except under glass. At one time he accepted the substitute of small evergreens plunged in the empty flowerbeds, but afterwards rejected this as a makeshift, and decided that we ought to consider winter as a time to rest from the pleasures of the outside garden. Possibly the good Dean was unconsciously influenced by that failing of his time of which Lavender spoke, the desire for too much bloom, which exalted the flower at the expense of the rest of the plant, otherwise he could hardly have thought that the joy of the garden was stopped till the first snowdrop came out. But long before that, long before the year turns, we have the deep interest of seeing the evidence of Nature's unbroken circle, the reviving life which does not go by the calendar. Before the Michaelmas—I beg your pardon, Daisy, starwort *is* the better word—starwort flowers have finished seeding, the young growth is crowding up round their stems, puzzling us why the tender leaves are not destroyed by the bitter winds and frosts. Daffodils are through the surface long before Christmas, some other bulbs are even further advanced, snowflakes (the summer kind) are inches tall, mossy saxifrages and thymes have their freshest green. These things seem, more even than evergreens



NOVEMBER SNOW ON LATE-FLOWERING ROSES

proper, to satisfy the feeling, which I suppose lies below most of our garden pleasure, there is no word which exactly expresses it, the delight in growth pure and simple, as the manifestation of the hidden life. This brings us an ever-fresh pleasure mixed with a sort of delicious surprise, when seeds come up and buds appear out of dry sticks, and the old roots throw up new shoots. The dear old Vicomte in *The Man from America* puzzles his little granddaughters by his astonishment when the mignonette comes up "just where he had planted it," but any true gardener would entirely understand his feelings. You know our friend Moira always wants to have "plants with souls which come back in the spring with new bodies," the only poetical translation of that often misapplied word "herbaceous" that I ever heard, but like all real poetry, it is strictly true. We look for this miracle in spring, but it is a great pleasure to realize that it is going on all the year.

To go back to the plan of plunging evergreens in winter, I have never had the means of trying it, and therefore it seems something like sour grapes for me to dislike it, but I can't fancy myself ever finding it tolerable. To begin with, the idea of empty beds would worry me, and anything so transitory as little bushes or trees which could not be supposed to be really growing where they were planted, would jar on all my sense of fitness.

I think there are better ways of keeping a winter garden from looking bare and dreary. No doubt the permanent planting of evergreen bushes was a good deal overdone, especially in small gardens, and when there came a reaction against them, they were denounced as heavy, uninteresting, holding smuts, and taking all the goodness out of the ground. Bad selections added to the prejudice against them, the common and Portugal laurels, euonymus, and yew were put into places for which they were totally unsuited, and were most depressing. But shall that prevent us from having hollies of all kinds, delightful berberis, box, hardy veronicas, and many more? Not at all, and we will have yew hedges too, where they will suit the garden, and enjoy the pleasure of a sunny morning's stroll, while our trusty evergreens keep off the winter wind. It all depends on planting them with judgment, and being quite sure that they are wanted in any particular spot, before they are put in, spattering them about anyhow, as we so often see done, is disastrous everywhere, and ruinous in a small garden. People seem to forget that evergreens do grow. Because holly does not shoot up like sycamore, you will see a stout young tree set in a spot where in a few years, it must either be crowded, or very much in the way. I have a personal feeling on this point, because my particular pet variegated holly,

some twenty years old, is much too near the house (we did not plant it), and I am afraid of moving it.

Then there are evergreen plants as well as bushes, which may droop in a black frost, but revive instantly with softer air, thrift, periwinkle, arabis, erysimum, which some folks call perennial wallflower, real wallflower, pinks, and so on, mostly keeping close to the breast of Mother Earth, and sharing her warmth. There are also half evergreens, which keep their colour for a good way through the winter, and are pleasant to look at till the young growth begins to show. These naturally vary with the severity of the season, but in an ordinary year some of the rose foliage is still handsome up to the New Year, so is that of the great St. John's wort, and the Barrenwort, although it changes colour, is pretty until the little flowers push up. Ferns, too, how pleasant they are to look at in the winter, the real evergreen ones, as the polypoddies for instance, and the long lasting harts-tongues, which keep green till a very sharp frost comes. Every winter I am grateful to Canon Ellacombe for advising that these ferns should be planted in flower beds, quite as much for their winter as for their summer beauty.

Here perhaps, I might answer what Rosemary asked about winter carpets, and an example will make it plain. Suppose you have a nice sheltered

border, seen from the house, which therefore you like to keep attractive, and I may say in passing, that this matter of views from the windows is not as much studied as it might be. Suppose further that this border is well furnished with choice small bulbs, *Iris reticulata*, *Ixias*, *Sparaxis*, and the like, and that it affords an excellent place for putting out tender plants, but by late autumn it becomes distinctly melancholy. Well then, you look round the garden for some little plants which will keep green and growing through the winter, and of which there are enough to plant over the space in question. You will not want to plant them so closely that they will have grown into a mat by spring, but neither should they be set so thinly as to look skimpy. The plants which it has been most convenient to me to use are arabis, seedling forget-me-nots, and violets, but there are others which would do as well if one had plenty of them. I grow the arabis by just sticking the rosettes into the ground in moist autumn weather, and disregarding the roots; it always does well. Self-sown violets run riot in this garden, and have to be sternly kept down, so I am glad to use them for carpeting, and as for forget-me-nots, we all know how seedlings come up everywhere within sight of a last year's plant—there are only too many of them. When the spring is well advanced, and

the other inhabitants of the border are asserting themselves, I should take the carpets up and probably use them elsewhere. You may have an arabis edging which has grown shabby and straggling—nothing wants renewing oftener than arabis, unless it is kept constantly clipped—and the carpet will come in very handy for this. The violets will have grown into big plants, of which you can keep the runners, if you want any, and of course forget-me-not must be pulled up when it is past the flowering stage. Besides making the border look furnished throughout the winter, and sheltering the bulbs as they come up, the carpet keeps the surface of the soil from getting that sodden, weather-beaten look which bare ground always assumes after long exposure, and it also prevents caking as the top soil dries, so it well repays the small amount of trouble required to plant it.

There is yet another class of plants of much value for winter green, those which are obliging enough to get over the time when they are shabby or disappear altogether, just when the garden is so full of other things, that it is never noticed, and there are more of them than people think. Such are the Oriental Poppies; there is a short time when their disreputable withered leaves seem to mock the vanished splendour of the flowers, but we cut them away, and think no more, till presently

up come the soft green leaves to stand as solid tufts all through the winter, very pleasant to see.

As we confide our difficulties to each other, I should like, for the sake of variety, to tell of a success which illustrates this subject, more particularly as it came from following Rosemary's advice, given long before we thought of the Guild. It was about my raised border, which, as you may remember, is well sheltered, and has a good aspect. Through the spring and summer it had been quite satisfactory, except that it suffered a little from drought in the hot weather, but as the winter came on something in it annoyed me. It was orderly, but it was comfortless, so when Rosemary came to stay for a few days, I asked her what was the matter. After a little meditation, she said consolingly, "It's only a tiny bit too strictly herbaceous." I didn't quite understand, so she said there were too many plants which behaved like Vaughan's Crown Imperial who became "a warm recluse" all the winter,

to repair
Such losses as befell him in this air,

and consequently their places were left forlorn. We consulted as to how this could be remedied, and I needn't tell you that Rosemary "spake both well and wisely," and I endeavoured to profit for the future.

Not to pause over the plants which had to come out, the first thing I did was to educate a number of Alpine wallflowers for the front of the border. I like these little wallflowers for such a purpose, as they never become topheavy. Then we were using as table plants some small aralias; while the weather was still warm, they were planted out near the wall which backs this border, and their big leaves at once altered the general effect. For perennials which do not die down, I made good clumps of Oriental Poppies as aforesaid, large-flowered campanulas, and single rocket, for alas! these times double white rocket seems almost impossible to get. I may say that the campanulas were moved in spring, which suits them much better than moving in autumn. Then I thought of bulbs. Rosemary's Peruvian scillas had inspired me with a desire to have some too, and they met my views very well, as they make their fresh growth in autumn, or even earlier when they are established. I had a good many *Sternbergia lutea* bulbs which were not flowering where they were, so I took them up and planted them round the roots of some of the herbaceous stuff left in the border, as of course I had not taken it all away, and small bulbs do very well so planted. Sternbergias are delightful even if they do not flower; the strap-shaped leaves are so bright and last so long; but I had this year a very pretty

combination of some early blooming Christmas roses with the brilliant little yellow Sternbergias. I wish they had an English name. Then I made quite a big planting of summer snowflakes, which were badly needing dividing, and I had a gift from Ireland of the large-leaved shrubby veronicas, which are doing well, though they are tenderer than the narrow-leaved kind. The result of all this was that the next winter the border looked well furnished and cheerful, the fresh green of the bulbs' leaves being especially welcome, when most foliage was faded. Oh, I forgot to mention a patch of *Tritileia uniflora*, which comes up so early, and has such a lovely green leaf, that it is well worth having in winter, though the starry little flowers belong to spring.

Though I grow both Christmas and Lent roses, I have not included them among the pleasures of the winter garden, partly because they will not do everywhere and are often spoilt by bad weather, partly because I was thinking chiefly of the enjoyments to be had without actual blossoms, but we can have some flowers in winter beyond a doubt. The winter jessamine is the most trustworthy of all, with its shower of golden stars, beginning early and lasting long, and in most years we cut winter honeysuckle, polyanthus, primroses, and the little violets which are so delicately sweet. Still, these things must vary so much with situation and season and

so forth, that I do not want to dwell on them too much.

So far, I have only been speaking of the open garden, the charms of which seemed to me to be slighted, but I am far from denying that the possession of even a little glass place does add to the pleasures as well as to the work of winter. Even a small frame "would be something," as Dick Swiveller said of the umbrella when his clothes were gone. Myself, I think that one gets most good out of a small frostproof greenhouse, if it is used mainly as a feeder for the garden, and to help with the house plants, as growing regular greenhouse plants must mean a good deal of heating and work generally, and they would seem to some extent wasted if they were only seen on the shelves. A structure opening out of the house would, naturally, be differently treated, as the flowers could be enjoyed from inside. Be that as it may, there is certainly much satisfaction in piloting tender things through all the varied risks of the winter, frost and damp, mould and shrivelling, to a renewed beauty in the open air. Part of this winter work in the greenhouse should come very naturally to us women, as we are well used to looking out for dust, and clearing up untidiness, and without such attentions the place cannot thrive. My private dustpan and brush is always being used to sweep off fallen leaves and rubbish,

much to the diversion of my cousin George, who is mighty scornful of my "greenhouse-maiding" and frequent renewals of white paint. But though George is a fine rose-grower, and well worth attending to on many matters, he does not know the first thing about indoor work, and while by brushing and cleaning I can reduce the chances of mould and mildew among my pets, I shall stick to my dustpan. Besides, I find that it makes a great difference to my own comfort when I go to the greenhouse on a dark winter's day to have the floor swept, the white paint making the most of all the light available, no wet, mouldy stuff lying about, and the shelves all bright and clean. And I do *not* like spiders anywhere !

HEATHER.

LILY'S PROBLEM

CAN my Guild Sisters help me to meet this difficulty? The rainwater butt, which catches the rain from part of the roof, stands rather near one of the windows, and I am troubled at noticing an increase in the mosquito-like gnats which come into that room, because they annoy my mother so much. I tried covering the butt, and then the water began to smell badly, and I had to draw it off as quickly as possible. I can easily refill the butt by a short length of hose from a tap. Would it be a good plan to change the water completely from time to time? I should be sorry to do away with the butt altogether, as the water here is rather hard for flowers.

LILY.

Daisy's Solution.

As my husband has had to do with such matters, both at home and in foreign parts, I consulted him on your problem, and he sends you this advice, Get a pound of charcoal, tie it up loosely in a bag of some sort, with a stone to weight it, and sink it in the butt; this will keep the water sweet; but in hot

weather it would be as well to change the water, as you propose. A cover of perforated zinc would protect the surface of the water and probably prevent the gnats from laying their eggs in the crevices, while admitting air. As a last resource, pour some paraffin on the surface, enough to cover it; but it is to be hoped that this will not be necessary, as it would keep you from using the butt for dipping purposes. (I should think the paraffin smell worse than the gnats!) Have the butt cleaned out from time to time. Hoping this will help you.

DAISY.

The other Guild Sisters could not improve on this counsel.

DELICATE GARDENERS

BY ROSEMARY

“Persons in little gardens, having also little strength and little leisure—but the earth love is there all the same.”—
J. H. EWING.

DEAR GUILD SISTERS,—

It was fortunate for me that when Daisy asked me to write on this subject, she also gave me an idea of the sort of person she had in her mind's eye, a lady, not at all an invalid, and able to be out in her garden a good deal, but for whom chills, damp and over-fatigue are most undesirable, and who therefore is always in the tiresome state of having to be careful. The garden was not large enough to require a regular gardener, and outside help could be had when needful, but extra expenses had to be avoided. This outline was a great help to me, as making the wide subject more definite, while the class indicated is so large that any advice suitable for it will need but little alteration for delicate gardeners in other circumstances. When thinking over these matters, I was reading (for the hundredth time, or so !) Mrs. Ewing's *Letters from*

a Little Garden, from which my motto is taken, and I came on a passage which describes this class very accurately. "The gardening members of a family, whether young or old, are very often not those vigorous people who can enjoy their fresh air at unlimited tennis, or a real good stretching walk across the hills. They are oftener those weaker vessels who have to be content with strolls, and drives and sketching, and 'pottering about the garden.'"

I should like to say to any such weaker vessel, I am not going to annoy you by the stupid negative advice not to do too much, as if one ever knew what was too much till one had done it ! It is something positive that you want to help you out of your difficulties, but take courage, there are compensations in all things, and even the very real hindrance of your bodily weakness may be balanced in another way. You must let your brains make up for your muscles, which is to say, that by thinking beforehand, and carefully considering what you want to do, you will achieve the largest results with the least amount of fatigue. *Fatigue*, mind you, not trouble ; very likely you will need to take a good deal of trouble, but it will not be of a sort to hurt you.

Now I must make a few suggestions about your garden equipment, for that is important. It is very odd that so many women are really very foolish on this point, and give themselves so much needless

trouble; they would not attempt to brush their hair with broken hairbrushes, but they will try to do things in the garden with the most ridiculously insufficient tools, and the most delicate are often the most reckless. They say in effect, "I can do so little, that it is not worth while my having proper tools." And so I have seen one friend trying to drive nails into a fence with a penny hammer; another planting bulbs with a miserable trowel, apparently made of tin, and so badly put together that the handle rubbed a hole in her palm; and yet another wearing out her small strength in going to and fro over the wide spaces of her garden, to fetch the various things she required, when with a light zinc "Lady's" wheelbarrow she could have brought them all in one journey. The tool shops are partly to blame, for the tools they sell which are supposed to be suited for ladies' use are often very poor things, spades which would hardly build a child's sandcastle, and forks of which the prongs break off the first time they encounter a tough root. Of course, too, heavy tools would not do either; but here you can bring your brains to bear on the selection, choosing those which you can use easily, while making sure that they are strong. A heavy but well-balanced hammer is a great comfort. I had a geological one once which was the joy of my life, till a wretched paperhanger stole it! If you

have anything to do with nailing on wooden fences, be sure and have a little gimlet in your pocket, it is a great saving of effort, and use large tacks, or wire nails, instead of the usual "garden nails" which always seem calculated to make the largest holes, and to break off with the greatest speed possible.

You will not require a large number of tools, but do try to have those which you do need of good quality, they will be worth their cost many times over. And when you have got a tool good, treat it well. It astonishes me to see the way in which, for instance, a good pair of spring clippers, a most useful implement, will be allowed to get nearly black with rust and stickiness from plant juices, till it is completely blunted, when a slight rubbing with an oiled rag and a scrap of fine sandpaper before it was put away would have kept it perfectly clean and sharp. Bright steel tools should never be left lying about in potting sheds and such places, it is no great trouble to bring them back to the house. I own to a weakness for seeing my scissors and other cutting tools as bright as Walter Scott had his inkstand, which always looked just fresh from the shop.

There are also a few things, not tools, which are almost as indispensable, and among these I should reckon a kneeling mat, such as housemaids use when cleaning stone floors. There are elaborate ones

made specially for gardening now, but the old-fashioned sort answer very well, especially if dried now and then. This will save you from the weariness of stooping when you must have your hands near the ground, and from being tempted to the folly of kneeling on damp grass.

Another most useful object is one of the gardener's regular two-handled baskets, into which one can pile quantities of broken branches, long leaves, and all sorts of rubbish, without fear of the whole promptly tumbling out again, as it always does in a shallow basket. A word may need to be said on watering appliances. You will want a small fine-rosed can for pot plants and the like, but do not attempt to make it do the work of a large one, because you cannot carry heavy pots about. Endless journeys to and fro are terribly tiring, and a fair-sized can half filled will answer your purpose much better. But if there is much watering which *must* be done, a light hose is better still, and two lengths are better than one long one, as they are easier to move about. Perhaps it should be said that a light hose does not mean an inferior one, which will split directly, but one with a small diameter, say of half an inch. All the same, you will be well advised if you reduce the amount of necessary watering as much as possible, by mulching, keeping the surface stirred, and above all, by choos-

ing plants which do not flag immediately the weather is dry.

Now permit me to suggest the consideration of your personal needs, for it is one of the drawbacks of not being strong, that one cannot ignore damp, and heat, and bitter winds, in the fashion of robust folks. Damp is, perhaps, the most difficult thing to manage, more particularly as it is really hard nowadays to get boots that will keep out the wet, and the American fashion of rubbers is not convenient in the garden. For use when the ground is really wet there is nothing like the wooden-soled boots, "clogs" as they say in the north, now made on purpose for ladies' garden use. They are not as heavy as very thick boots would be, and are easily slipped on and off, and if they are loose, the addition of a crochet woollen sock keeps the feet delightfully warm and dry. It takes a little practice to walk in them at first, and it is fatal to try and use them in soft snow, as one instantly realizes the feelings of a "balled" horse. For that one needs "Polar" snow boots, and though a delicate gardener would not habitually go about the garden in deep snow, it is convenient to be able to make a dash out for emergencies without taking harm. At other times of year, tennis shoes are very useful, especially with a thick cork sole added to them. Next to your feet consider your skirts. Probably you would keep a

short garden skirt to use in damp weather, but do remember to change it whenever you come in ; that damp edge at the bottom of the skirt has much to answer for. Gloves in wet weather present a real difficulty, as they spoil and get stiff if one works in them, and one's fingers get into a horrid mess if they are taken off. I do not suggest that you should think of gardening in downpours of rain, but one does want to be sufficiently protected not to be obliged to flee to the house for a slight shower, and to be able to seize the fine intervals between rain, when much may be done, though leaves and branches may be glittering with drops. Knitted gloves are comfortable unless one is dealing with anything thorny, and there is much wear to be got out of men's dogskin gloves, if they are not too stiff, which is the drawback to the gloves generally sold for gardening purposes. There is nothing gained by protecting one's hands if it is not possible to bend one's fingers.

Having settled these preliminaries, let us now look round the garden, and see whether there is anything which could be altered so as to save you needless labour without injuring the general effect ? Here you may be surprised by the first question, can you reduce the grass ? Whether Violet is right or not in asserting that the grass is the most costly thing in the garden, there is no doubt in

any gardener's mind that it requires the most labour. Non-gardeners will not understand this because mowing the grass is mechanical work, not requiring consideration, and they do not realize that it has to be done continually through the greater part of the year. You can often leave a bed or border to its own devices for weeks together, and no very great harm happens, but leave a grass-plot to itself, and you find a hayfield seeding all over the place, and, moreover, spoiling itself as well. A lawn is such a beautiful thing in itself, if well kept, and is so needful to set off our flowers, that we cannot possibly do without it, but there is a great deal of grass in gardens which is by no means indispensable. For instance, we see not unfrequently a narrow strip of turf, only a foot or so wide, separating a border from a walk, not attractive in appearance because it is rarely well kept. To use a mowing machine on it is very difficult, and to keep the edges neat takes both time and trouble. If it were abolished, and the border provided with a good edging of some suitable plant, such as Her Majesty pinks, the general effect would be much handsomer, and much labour would be spared. And here is a word to the wise—don't let the rejected turf be thrown away; pile it carefully in layers, the grass downwards, to crumble down into excellent soil for many purposes, and if you can put some manure between the layers it will be all the better.

If your garden is on anything of a slope, you are pretty sure to have some of the grass banks, which Miss Jekyll denounces with well merited scorn, for no more troublesome, inconvenient things were ever invented. In small gardens they always suggest the idea that some jobbing gardener introduced them to keep himself in work, for there are very few amateurs who could keep them decently tidy. If they are mown, the scythe-blade must be set at a special angle, they are too steep for the machine to run on, and no one knows what hand-clipping them means till it has been tried. Luckily, however, the remedy is not difficult. Have every bit of the grass taken off, and it is well to make sure that the roots of the weeds, which are certain to abound, are got out as completely as possible. Then, if you like, you can turn the bank into a dry, that is a mortarless, wall, and plant it with a few varieties of plants as a wall garden, and there are many charming flowers which are better so grown than anywhere else. Or you can make it into a rock bank, not putting in more stones than you can possibly help, and letting them be mostly hidden in the soil. Any natural stone will do, but I beg of you, do not tolerate either clinkers from the gasworks, or dirty bricks from some demolished slum, both favourite materials with a certain type of gardener. Clean bricks, now, will make a good dry wall in cases where stones

cannot be had, and the creeping rock plants will soon cover them up. Probably there will be lengths of bank which you may not wish to treat in either of these ways, and in that case you can dispense with stones altogether, and simply cover your bank with creeping or low-growing bushes, hanging plants, or any others which suit the position and aspect. The variety of plants which will thrive on banks is so great, that the only difficulty is to make a selection which shall be simple enough to avoid confusion. Do not think that you are being advised to launch out into reckless expenditure in buying these plants; the cost of the labour saved by doing away with the grass will be more than sufficient to start the banks, as you must leave plenty of room for things to spread.

One advantage of this bank culture is that you can have plants which like to be dry, such as cistus, or sunrose, at the top of your bank, and the lovers of more moisture, as irises and primroses, down below. Some attention they will need, now and again, but it will be child's play compared to the labour with the grass. It is very desirable to keep your creeping plants from straggling or running into mats, for which reason periwinkle, pretty as it is, had better be avoided, unless one has time to keep the old growths cut away, as it spreads rapidly into a thick curtain, where snails harbour to an unlimited extent. I have

heard of a large rock bank which was a cascade of periwinkle in various colours a year or two after planting, and I always wonder what it was like a few years later, especially if the owner wished to have any other plants there as well.

When the garden is all on level ground, the shape of the beds is often a cause of needless labour in cutting the grass. It stands to reason that sharp points and corners are more troublesome to cut than curves round which the machine runs with no check. Look at a star-shaped bed, and you will see at once that the points of grass must be hand-clipped, and also that there is a large amount of edge to each point, whereas if you change your star to a simple round, you not only save the labour of cutting, but get a much easier bed to plant. Anything planted at the extreme end of a sharp point must be unsatisfactory, because there is no room for it to grow properly. The sharp corner of a square bed is awkward too, as the grass edge quickly gets out of shape, but it is very simple to fill up the corner into an easy curve, which also does away with a tiresome little place where water lodges in wet weather. The "tyranny of the grass edge," to quote Miss Jekyll again, is another cause of wasted labour; it is what one always sees where regulation bedding out is practised—a hard line where the grass meets the flower-bed, with a little hollow just under the turf

to permit the necessary continual clipping. It is not pretty, and it causes a great deal of trouble, but with permanent beds it can be got rid of. The best way of doing so is to fill up the hollow with a rough stone edging, and to grow some pretty creeping plant over it ; but where stones are lacking, the hollow can be well filled up with earth, and an edging of some solidly growing plant, thrift or London Pride, for instance, can be introduced. Where something specially important looking is wanted, Saxifrage *Megasea* makes a fine edging. Some trimming will be needed to keep both grass and edging within bounds, but it will not have to be done nearly as often as before the change.

When you have attended to all these matters and cut out all the beds which you require, perhaps you will find that the grass-cutting has been reduced to what you can do yourself, and the hired labour can be turned on to what is really too heavy for you to attempt. With an easily running machine, kept in good order, and grass never allowed to get long, mowing is not so tiring as people think, if there is not too much of it. Speaking of fatigue, one of the most tiring of operations—weeding—can be much lightened in two ways. The first is to make a practice, as early as you can in the year, of walking about the garden with a hoe in your hand, and gently scuffling up the surface of any bare ground. This will kill



DAFFODILS IN GRASS

many of the weeds while they are still small, and also be very good for the soil. The second way is to have as few bare patches as possible by keeping the ground well covered, and leaving the weeds very little room.

Now we come to the point in which your brains can do most of all to save your limbs, the choice of plants, always bearing in mind that this is not a matter to be settled in one season or two ; we must experiment and try, and learn by degrees. Still, most people get their plants first, and think about them afterwards, and an enormous amount of effort would be saved if they reversed the process, and got some sort of idea what they were aiming at. Roughly speaking, your object would be to discover which plants would give you most enjoyment among those which could fairly be expected to thrive with the amount of attention that you could give them, and this is an inquiry which you can carry on at your leisure.

We may put really tender plants out of the question, as the hardy ones will provide an ample field. Now there are two mistakes made about the cultivation of hardy plants : people imagine either that they require no care at all, or else that one has always to be fussing after them. Obviously, a *garden* of hardy plants, where something is growing the whole year round, wants more continued attention

than a garden of tender things, where the beds are empty for half the year, but the individual plants require much less care. The truth is that most hardy plants are the better of attention at some time, if it be only to take off withered flowers, but they will not die without it, and we need not attend to them to the minute. On the other hand, there are many hardy plants which are too troublesome for a delicate gardener, as they spoil rapidly if they do not get their special requirements of frequent division, or feeding, or training, and so on. Many also increase so fast as to be overpowering; the larger day-lilies, for example, spread their octopus-like roots in all directions so quickly that a bed is crowded up in no time; and there are small plants which are just as bad with their runners; it takes a person in robust health to cope with the Indian strawberry! Such things you need to reject sternly, or to discard if you have them already, and save your strength for what you can manage. It is a great pity when any one permits a garden to become a source of weariness and anxiety, by undertaking more than can be accomplished comfortably, and so losing what should be pure refreshment of spirit; but we meet with this only too often, and indeed the temptation to it is very great.

Another point should be considered. There are many plants which require much labour treated

in one way, but can be had with little trouble and much enjoyment when treated in another. Spring bulbs are a good example. It need hardly be said that the method of filling whole beds with them, which have afterwards to be filled with something else, is not suited to you, the lifting, drying, storing away and replacing, means an amount of labour which you should not attempt, but there are better ways open to you. Take a glance through the more familiar classes of bulbs, and see what you can do with them. Daffodils, and indeed most narcissus, deteriorate in borders crowded among other plants, as they have not room to increase comfortably, but you can plant them out in the grass, as is done so beautifully in Hyde Park, making good clumps sufficiently apart from each other to let the mowing machine run between them, so that the leaves can be left to wither in peace, without spoiling the grass. The beautiful polyanthus narcissus, by the way, does better in borders than most of the family, as it does not increase so fast ; still it will flower splendidly in grass though the contrary is sometimes asserted.

Daffodils can also be planted on banks, and combine very well there with ferns, which will be uncurling just when the daffodils are going off, and there is nothing against having them in such borders as were described in Daisy's problem, where they

would not be crowded. Such shy-flowering narcissi as the double Poeticus, and the delicate Angel's tears, are best avoided, as they are often disappointing.

Snowdrops and crocuses only want places where they will not be disturbed—generally speaking, though snowdrops sometimes seem capricious,—they certainly like moisture while growing. I like a thick band of crocuses of one colour, or purple and white together, just inside the stone edging of a bed, and I find that the sparrows rarely touch them if they are grown in this way, but they must be thickly set. Such a wreath of crocuses will come up year after year if they are let alone, and if you do not allow their leaves to be tied up in tight knots, like the tails of horses going to a fair. This hideous practice, carried on in the name of tidiness, must have originated in the days when, as Heather says, all luxuriance was considered untidiness. A crocus leaf is a beautiful thing in itself, with its polished dark green relieved by the satiny white stripe down the middle, and can any one really prefer to see unsightly little lumps sticking up in the border, rather than the flowing grace of the drooping leaves? People who quite understand that narcissus must have their leaves left them to breathe with, will yet allow their crocuses to be maltreated in this way, and never think that the twisted, screwed-up leaves cannot possibly perform their proper functions of taking in

the good of the air to feed up the corms. When I hear complaints that crocuses deteriorate quickly, I always feel sure that they have not had fair play.

Hyacinths are supposed to need lifting every year, but in a sunny place and not too dry soil, the ordinary bedding hyacinths will often last for a long time, and if they become a little slighter in build, they are all the better for cutting, while grape hyacinths will sometimes grow like weeds. These are well suited for Heather's plan of setting small bulbs round the roots of larger plants. A ring of white grape hyacinths round a rose-bush is a quaintly pretty sight, but they do not always last.

As regards tulips, you must discriminate. The ordinary, so-called florists' tulips and most double kinds are not for you, as they must be lifted every year, but what are known as "species tulips" will go on well for years before they need dividing, if they can have a place to themselves. Some of these are very expensive, but not necessarily the most beautiful, and there are plenty of lovely sorts to be had at moderate prices. If you own a sunny bank which gets a good baking in summer, then you can throw convention to the winds, and plant that bank with a glorious jumble of Darwin tulips, *macrospeila*, *retroflexa*, and others of the May-flowering class, taking care to have plenty of white and cream among them, such as *virinalis* and *Silver Queen*, and

the result will be a splendour which will astonish you. Tulips on the level never show the waving grace of which they are capable when they rise one above another on the bank, and the sharp drainage with the warmth in summer seems to ripen the bulbs so well that they do not need to be lifted for years together, if not too thickly planted in the first instance. Such a bank must not be left bare when the tulips are over and even their leaves have vanished. After trying several coverings, I have come to think that Alpine strawberry (of the running, not the tufted kind) is about the best. It is pretty, spreads quickly, does not choke the tulips, and the bright little berries go on late into autumn, and are very good to eat. Sweet william also has merits as an overplanting for tulips, and where the bulbs are not too thick, the close carpet of lemon thyme is pretty and sweet.

The choice of varieties in these different kinds of bulbs is well worth some consideration, as you can add greatly to your enjoyment by so doing, and it is surprising to see how commonly this point is neglected. Take the matter of the length of time that the flowering lasts, which is certainly of some importance; but few people seem to realize that there are early and late varieties of most bulbs, and therefore a succession is possible, in the way that Lavender suggested for the invalids. Of

course, this consideration does not arise where the bulbs are bedded out, as the occupants of a bed must bloom together, and be removed together; but even for a permanent planting people will say, "Here is a nice bank for daffodils," and then proceed to order a large quantity of one sort, probably Lent Lilies, or double Telamonius, which are very pretty when they all come out; but before long it is all over, and perhaps some one is abusing "these untidy leaves," whereas it is possible to enjoy narcissi of one sort and another for between three and four months, beginning with tiny Minimus, and ending with Poeticus and jonquils, if we are at the pains of selecting them carefully. Crocuses, too, seem to be ordered in the most stereotyped fashion, though their season can be decidedly prolonged by choosing the right varieties, and the differences in beauty are immense. Yet you will constantly see the common bedding kinds planted, while for a few extra pence per hundred such beautiful flowers can be had as King of the Whites, and *Purpurea grandiflora*, which will be a joy for years, and the best Golden Yellow are very little dearer than the common sort, as half the number of bulbs will fill the same space. Then a few of the dainty "species crocuses" add a great charm to the early spring border, Imperati and Tommasinianus (such a name for a sweet little flower!), with their lovely

rosy mauves, and the later versicolor closing the procession. Even with snowdrops, why should we not add the stately beauty of the large Elwesii, to the familiar charms of the little nivallis, the snowdrop we all know so well?

You can go on to consider various other classes of plants in this way, bringing such information as you can get, as well as your experience of your own garden, to bear on the question of what you should take and avoid. You may feel equal to giving your pinks the yearly division by which they flourish, but decide that you will not undertake the layering of carnations, as being both tiring and uncertain. In another class, you may make up your mind to be content with Apennina anemones, and others of that charming group, and not hanker after the splendid Riviera and Poppy kinds which must have yearly treatment. Rock plants are well adapted for culture by any one not strong, they are easily handled, they grow freely, they are often pretty all the year round, and the small attentions which they need, such as weeding, taking away overgrowth and withered stuff, and giving occasional dressings of leaf mould, are not laborious. Also the low rocky slopes on which it is most convenient to have these plants, can be dealt with more easily and with less stooping than level ground. Doubtless a regular rock garden where very choice



LOW BANK WITH ROCK PINKS

Alpines can be grown must be very pleasant, but the easily grown rock plants may be just as beautiful, and can be enjoyed without elaborate arrangements.

The relative sizes of your plants should not be forgotten; it is troublesome to have an unwieldy mass which is always tumbling about, and smothering its neighbours, however good it may be in other respects. Such plants should only be grown where they can have plenty of space. For this reason the smaller growing starworts are to be preferred to the taller ones in a limited garden, especially those varieties of the *ericoides* kind, whose firm but slender stems arch from the root like a little fountain. But if you have a handsome group, say of larkspur, do not spare your stakes, and spread it well out; don't tie it up in a bundle to one stick.

After the selection of your plants, the arrangement of them is very important to your comfort, and here I would remind you that nothing will save you so much trouble in the garden as getting the soil well prepared, so that your things may thrive. It is the paradox which we come across so often, to save trouble you must take trouble. I do not at all mean that your beds and borders are to be continually dug up, and turned out; it is only non-gardeners who think all gardening is digging, and that notion of annual digging is the

destruction of heaps of good plants and shrubs ; but I mean that you should notice if the soil in a bed seems to require renovating, and then have it done thoroughly in the autumn. This would not mean any large work in any one year, yet your whole garden would be done by degrees. In this work your head and not your hands would be mainly required, and yours will be a most important part of the business, if you can make sure that the plants on the plot to be renewed are carefully lifted and protected while out of the ground, that the soil is really dug deeply enough (a point often shirked), that the subsoil is well stirred and enriched, without being brought to the top, and the manure thoroughly mixed with earth as it is put in. Then if fresh soil has to be added, you can see that enough allowance is made for the sinking of the surface, and finally, there will be the replanting to supervise very closely. Some people assume that they can know nothing about work which they do not execute with their own hands. It is not so. You can learn how these simple things should be done without difficulty, if you give your mind to it.

Passing now from the preparation of the soil, how can you best arrange your plants so that they shall thrive without overburdening you with work ? Of course, much would depend on your own strength, but speaking generally, it would be wise for you to



FREE-GROWING ROSES

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have most of your spaces filled with such permanent plants as can take care of themselves for the greatest part of the year, and if you are able to attend to more exacting subjects, concentrate them in some bed or border which you can reach easily, and which is not too large to be kept in nice order. By the way, if you can help it, do not have very wide beds, they are much harder to manage than those of a moderate width, always aiming at good proportion in any case. We hear so much of the troubles of rose culture, that it may sound surprising to have roses put first among the desirable occupants of your permanent beds, but if roses are well chosen and well treated, nothing will give you more pleasure in proportion to the care you can bestow on them. Naturally you will not want the delicate, shy-blooming creatures who have about one blossom a year and die in a hard winter, but the choice of hardy, free-flowering roses is immense in these days. Think of the sweetbriers, the Many-flowered, the Wichuriana hybrids, the Japanese roses, the delicious little polyanthas, such hybrid teas as Caroline Testout, to name only one of that beautiful sisterhood, and such noisettes as William Allan Richardson. Then the dear old-fashioned roses, the hundred-leaved, the moss, the damasks, they may not flower so long as the newer kinds, but how lovable they are! Many of these want little more than good

soil, and to be let alone, except when there is dead wood to be cut away. So let us count on roses for one or more of the permanent beds. You can encircle your rose-bushes with small bulbs and carpet them with violas, or any other pretty surfacing, and then with a good edging, your bed will be a pleasure to look at through by far the most part of the year.

Speaking of violas, there is a highly unorthodox but successful way of treating them and pansies also which might be useful to you. Instead of lifting, dividing, making cuttings, and so forth, the plan is simply, in the autumn, to pull off every bit of long straggling stem, whether it has flowered or not. Young shoots will come up, and grow away gaily in spring year after year, especially if you give them a rest by cutting them back in the height of summer.

Beds of one plant will be very suitable for you, and look extremely well ; indeed, one of the secrets of this kind of gardening is to have good masses of one thing at a time. Japanese anemones are delightful in a bed to themselves, appearing to far greater advantage than when mixed with other things ; their only drawback is the unsightliness of the dead leaves in winter, so they are best not set in the full view of the windows. But a bed of Florentine Cistus is beautiful at all times ; this makes an excellent



FLORENTINE CISTUS

bed of low-growing plants, just as hollyhocks are grand where tall ones are required.

Then we must think of the principle of succession. Heather indicated something of this in speaking of her once "too herbaceous" border, where she combined things beautiful at different times, and it is a most interesting way of gardening. A small bed that I know of may illustrate the process. It is a round bed and has a thick ring of crocuses next to the stone edging as advised above. Then comes a band of London Pride; this is replanted every three years by sticking in the largest available rosettes in the late autumn, it is also kept closely trimmed. Then come May-flowering tulips converging towards the centre where big hartstongue ferns girdle a pillar of Reine Olga de Wurtemberg rose. The tulips are surfaced with forget-me-not seedlings, which are pulled up when their beauty is over, and their places are taken by plants of ivy-leaf geranium, or if these are not available, some such annual as Tricolor convolvulus is used instead. Another good combination for a narrow strip of a bed consisted of the beautiful and strangely unused umbellatum lilies, delightfully sturdy things, improving from year to year, with Narbonne flax in front, and yellow Montbretias behind, which came into beauty so as to succeed the lilies. In such combination beds places can be

made for annuals or biennials if desired; in fact, there is no end to the pleasant variations which can be made according to circumstances and opportunity. It is not an expensive way of gardening either, as, while some changes and renewals will probably be made every year, the main part of the garden will go steadily on. With time, patience, and intelligence, our Delicate Gardener ought to achieve a garden which will be an unfailing source of satisfaction to her.

Perhaps here comes in a voice from the class of still more delicate gardeners, who love their flowers, and yet are able to work but very little among them, saying, "Have you no advice for me, who can't weed, or stoop, or water, without suffering for it?" I fear I have more sympathy than advice, yet I will say that the thing for you to study is an art which I own I always fail in, the art of directing some one else. It is very difficult, but with pains it can be learnt, if you try to be clear in your own mind what it is that you desire to have done, and to find out how it can best be managed. Your brains must utilize the hired muscles, you see, and do not let yourself be discouraged by the idea which is apt to intrude, that it is absurd for you to be teaching a man his business, because it is quite likely that he has never learnt to *think* about his work at all, and you must do the thinking. You would do well also

to imitate the lady, who, finding that she had no real control over her large garden and outdoor establishment, set herself to study up the subject from books and papers, and by seeing gardens and consulting people of experience. When she had mastered the subject sufficiently to have a good idea of what should be done, she found that she could then assert her authority, and by using her trained intelligence in the direction of her garden, she could manage it far better than had ever been done there before. You may not need to go so deeply into the subject, but the more you really understand what you are talking about, the easier it will be to direct other people. At all events, you will not copy "Elizabeth," when she read extracts out of wise books to her gardener while he was working. I never wondered that he shortly went mad; I am sure that I should have done the same!

To meet the not uncommon difficulty that you cannot command unlimited labour, the best plan is to simplify your arrangements as much as you can, so that none of the available help shall be wasted, and more is often possible in this way than may appear at the first blush. Don't attempt too much, think over what you do attempt, and cultivate a calm mind. Then you will do well.

Now, my dear Heather, wasn't this paper getting too long already, without your appealing to my

feelings to help your Little Lady, who isn't strong, and hasn't much money, but has a huge, neglected, walled garden, with big vacant spaces, some in grass, and others bare, and hardly any labour to be spared from the vegetables! Perhaps there are others in much the same case, so I will try to suggest something. First, I think if she is able to do *any* work herself, that she should decide how large or small a portion of the garden she has a reasonable prospect of keeping in order, in the usual way of beds and borders, and reserve her actual working powers principally for that, in which case some of the suggestions made above may be useful to her, Or, should her powers be very limited indeed, rock borders and banks would really be the best for her, for the reasons I have already given. But in either case, she should also keep a plot or two, in an open situation, for pricking out seedlings, striking cuttings, and such useful little operations. Then for the big empty spaces, I presume that she could get them dug by degrees, and then she might start by a free sowing of annuals, especially those convenient ones which resow themselves, and she would have a good chance of trying the autumn sowing, which is highly recommended, but for which it is generally so hard to find room.

Having made this beginning, she could then turn her mind to getting up a stock of perennials, shrubs,



SELF-SOWN FOXGLOVES

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etc., by which the emptiness could be permanently filled. Here would be a place for the swiftly spreading day-lilies, of which I spoke before, for tall phloxes and starworts, single sunflowers, giant scabious, and a whole host of the fine things which are the despair of a small garden, not forgetting the magnificent anchusas. Some of these plants can be grown from seed, others increase so fast that a good stock can be got by steadily dividing a very few of them, others again can have cuttings or suckers taken from them as required. Then there are bushes, too, most easily increased—cistus, lavender, rosemary, brier roses, all grow quickly, and are very useful. She will not suppose that I advise the planting of such varied things in a jumble; on the contrary, the more she can simplify the planting, the better it will be. If the nature of the place allows it, she might arrange to have special “gardens” set apart, in which to have only two or three kinds of plants, say a starwort garden, with wallflowers set in between the clumps, or a hollyhock and foxglove garden, with plenty of primroses for spring beauty. The boundaries of such gardens might be imaginary, and they could run into each other without doing any harm, but they would help to get the plants into good masses, a matter of great importance in dealing with any large space. The handsome *Sylvestris* tobacco would be a fine plant to use in a

sunny place where its stately way of growth could be shown to the best advantage, and if sheltered, it often comes up year after year. I see that I mentioned foxglove just now, as if it were a perennial, which, of course, it is not, though it sometimes flowers for two years, but by looking after the self-sown seedlings, and occasionally raising some from fresh seed, the foxglove garden could be kept up without much trouble.

I trust that the Little Lady has also gardening friends, who will help her in this matter of filling these places, and I think they will find it much easier to do so if she has definite ideas as to what she most wants. If she can easily get plenty of common ferns, I advise a large use of them *among* her flowers, not kept apart in rockeries, and the bigger they are the better. There are also many perennials and biennials which have a convenient way of sowing themselves when the soil suits them. Columbines are delightful in this respect, as they are always making natural crosses, and producing fresh varieties and snapdragons and sweet-williams also sow themselves, and their seedlings are quite worth looking after.

Now as regards the grass-covered areas, unless these are large enough to be treated as small meadows, it would save much trouble in weeding the rest of the garden if the grass could be replaced by

a carpet of forget-me-not and woodruff, for the labour of keeping such grass continually cut could hardly be afforded, and yet the seeding which must result if it is allowed to grow long would be a serious hindrance to both flowers and vegetables. However this may be, the best way I can suggest for filling up such a space would be to use it for fountain-grown roses. This is a simple and not costly operation, for a *Polyantha grandiflora* rose, which costs a shilling, will grow into a mound thirty feet across if it is given time and room, and it has only to be planted and left alone, saving for the cutting out of dead wood in its early stages. Dundee Rambler is another good old rose to use as a fountain, so called because the young shoots, springing straight from the roots, bend and arch over like falling water. Most of the ramblers will do well in this way, and further, have a pleasant habit of rooting at the tips of the branches, which can be encouraged by pegging them down. When roots are formed, the new plant can either be moved, if it is wanted elsewhere, or left to make a fresh fountain in its turn. A smaller rose, which also roots freely in this way, is the Indian rose, very like the China rose, but with more pointed petals; this would be pretty keeping the larger roses company in other parts of the space.

The grass should certainly be well cleared away

round the roses, otherwise it would get into a tangle about their roots, and some little thing, such as Venus' looking-glass, might be sown in the cleared space till the roses grew large enough to cover it. Between the rose-bushes there might be large plantings of daffodils, not dibbled in one by one, but a number put together in wide openings made by the spade. Some people with whom money is scarce, and who are not in a hurry, wait to buy their bulbs for such naturalizing till late in the season, when prices are much reduced. They know that the bulbs will probably not flower well the first spring, but they count on their recovery in the second year, and thriving afterwards. As there are beautiful daffodils to be had for two and three shillings a hundred, I should personally prefer to add some every year, and to be sure of having them good by planting them as early as possible, but that is a matter of opinion.

If the Little Lady cares to screen off her fountain plot, a rough trellis would carry Penzance briers, or any of the *Wichurariana* hybrids, and make a charming frame for the special garden. And does she know the virtues of Jerusalem artichokes as screens in other places?

In conclusion, what she should aim at is a kind of ordered wildness. She should "evermore be bold," plan to have large masses, plenty of colour, and

give everything ample room. It sounds alarming, but in reality it will be far less work than anything feeble or spotty. Good luck to the Little Lady, and those like her.

ROSEMARY.

A PROBLEM FROM HEATHER

THE difficulty which is at present in my mind, is nearly the opposite of Rosemary's problem about the "Passionflower Shrine," as it concerns a bed in the shade. It is not, however, the "cool shady spot" which one is often supposed to have at disposal, as it would get the full sun most of the day, were it not for the tall syringa and other bushes which shade it on two sides. Still, being quite at the lowest point of the garden, it is moister than the other borders. Confession is good for other people's garden souls, so I will admit, for the benefit of my Sisters, that this bed has been a failure hitherto, because the wrong things have been grown in it, and are now coming out, as the soil is being renewed. The big snowdrops have done well there, and Osmunda ferns are growing handsomely; these, of course, I shall retain, but what shall the other inhabitants be? Would St. Bernard's lilies be likely to do well, as I have clumps which must be divided soon? The bed is round, and about nine feet across. What do you advise in this case?

HEATHER.

Daisy's Solution.

Yellow day-lilies would do, if you do not dislike their scent ; they do not spread as fast as the bigger kinds. The pretty Great Celandine and Foam flower (*Tiarella*) would look well with your ferns, and a carpeting of " Queen " forget-me-not, which I believe to be just a form of the water forget-me-not, *M. palustris*, but anyhow, it flowers all the summer.

DAISY.

Rosemary's Solution.

I think a good selection of spireas and columbines would fill your bed very prettily. I like white spireas of the Goatsbeard kind best myself, but that is a detail. Columbines are quite happy in such a place as your bed, and the " golden " kind last the longest in flower. The St. Bernard's lilies should answer very well when they have got over the dividing process.

ROSEMARY.

Violet's Solution.

Is there anything against your using the broad-leaved iris which you once recommended to Daisy ? I don't mean the very moist ones like the Kæmpferi, of course, but those which are less exacting. And you might have those fine tall white pyrethrums, and some of your own *Amplexicaulis Calceolarias*,

unless you gave me all your cuttings. I hope you didn't !

VIOLET.

Heather's Answer.

Best thanks for many delightful suggestions. I am going to take some of each, letting the spireas predominate, but the Great Celandine will be very good to have, as it comes up so early. If the lilies and calceolarias (of which I have plenty left, thank you, Violet,) do not fill up the bed, I can then decide between the day-lilies and columbines, as the pale blue forget-me-not will harmonize equally well with either. Irises were a failure in that bed, and I am inclining to think that many of them want sharp drainage to be happy. One has seen Pallida thriving gloriously on a thatched roof in Italy. However that may be, I am well provided now, thanks to my Sisters.

HEATHER.



COLUMBINES IN SHADY BED

BEING AWAY

BY DAISY

DEAR SISTERS,—

Among all the many troubles which try us in the garden, and about which people write to long-suffering editors, there is one which I have never seen mentioned, and no advice is ever offered on this point, yet we all suffer from it more or less. It is the trouble of Having to Be Away! Sometimes, indeed, there is a sort of suggestion that people who really love their gardens do not go away from them, which is entirely futile, as there are many things which take us away besides going for our own pleasure. But from whatever cause we have to go, the result is the same, and the garden has to be left. I need not dilate on what may follow, we know it only too well—grass growing into jungles, weeds rampant, seedlings starved or flooded, pot plants baked or frozen according to the time of year. And the still greater desolation if the gardener's man succeeds in getting in under the specious pretence of "tidying up" while we are away. "Once did I this thing, and that is sufficient."

When I was very young and foolish, I let a man come while I was away, and what Heather calls "scraped bareness" truly greeted me on my return. The weeds were gone, I suppose, but my seedlings and annuals had gone with them, and everything had an air of being cut to the bone. I all but wept over the dreary garden, but after all, I suffered less than a young couple that I know, who came home in autumn to find all their pretty spring bulbs lying on the surface of the borders, which had been "tidied." Excepting, indeed, the considerable number of bulbs stolen outright. This last grievance is, of course, no new one. You will remember Parkinson's entreaty to "all gentlemen and gentlewomen whom it may concern for their own good, to be as careful whom they trust with the planting and replanting of their fine flowers as they would with so many jewels, for the roots of many of them being small, and of great value, may soon be conveyed away, and a clean tale fair told, that such a root is rotten or perished in the ground, if none be seen where it should be !"

I am bound to say that this particular form of dishonesty has not come my way, and it is odd, that as far as I remember, those I have heard accused of such "conveying away" have not been ordinary jobbing gardeners, but men employed by large firms. After all, one does not hear of it very often,

considering the enormous increase of gardening of all sorts in comparatively recent years.

Going back to the subject of leaving home, it has surprised me to find that those who have resident gardeners, and have a real interest in their gardens, hardly complain less of the evil results of absence than those who have no responsible person to leave in charge. I hear it said that though the garden does not run wild, and the routine work goes on, yet there are so many mistakes, and forgettings, for want of the controlling eye, and so many things done quite wrong, and not easily undone, that it is almost as much worry as having nobody. I do not think that our experience, since we have had more regular help bears out this view, but everybody knows best where their own shoe pinches.

One thing I do feel pretty sure of, and that is, this difficulty about leaving gardens was a principal cause why the ordinary bedding-out system got, and still keeps, such a hold on them generally, and especially on those too small to have resident gardeners. The very points for which many of us dislike it now, the length of time that the beds were empty, the formality and routine of it, made going away quite easy whenever you wished to do so. From October to May (unless spring bedding were practised, and that was never universal), of course, there was nothing to think of, and when the bedding

plants were once set out, there was very little to do for them, except, perhaps, some watering, and whoever was chartered to cut the lawn could attend to that. There is no use in denying that to many people this way is a great convenience, and it is quite likely that the system holds its ground in many gardens now, just because the owners feel that nothing particular will happen if they are away for a few weeks. In their eyes this counterbalances the expense and other drawbacks, but I think we might find some better way of getting over the difficulty by, as Rosemary would say, using our brains. The usual solution airily offered by outsiders is, "Can't you get somebody to look after it for you?" which provokes the counter question, "Where is the somebody?" The available people may be divided into—a member of the family, one of the servants, or a gardener's man, as aforesaid. In practice, one member of the family generally does the garden work, and if there should be another able and willing to take it over, it often happens that the same time of year is the most convenient for both to be away. With regard to a maidservant, it would obviously be most unfair to expect her to do much, it is not her business, and she has never been taught the work. If we remember how long it took us to master such an elementary matter as keeping a pot plant moist (I am far from confident about always doing it

right now), we cannot be surprised if a girl who has never tried before makes a mess of it. Some of the objections to the jobbing gardener, or his man, I have spoken of already. It is not that he has any evil intentions, as a general thing, but he has usually got into a stupid way of working, from being badly trained, and he has often a rooted objection to doing what he is told. There are brilliant exceptions who have the true gardener's heart in them, and who, having attained to a good deal of practical experience, are always trying to improve their knowledge, but these, who could be trusted with anything, do not grow on every bush.

What then shall we turn to? Be away sometimes we must, that is certain, and few of us can choose our time of year, so as to go when the garden can best spare us, even if we know when that is. Heather says that January is apt to be a less busy month than the others. That may be true for us who live far enough south to get our plantings mainly over in autumn, but I understand that further north January is a great month for replanting hardy borders, and similar jobs. Any way, I think my Guild Sisters will agree that from New Year's Day to New Year's Eve the day does not dawn when we *like* to be away from our gardens! Then the problem is further complicated by differences of circumstances: I mean that some people, like Heather,

are liable to be called off suddenly (that is because you are so much too good to your friends, Heather my dear !), and others have to take their holidays at stated times. Here Violet, looking over my shoulder, wishes to know when the brains are coming in ? Wait a bit, madam, we shall never see our way through this business unless we face our difficulties fairly. And indeed I think that we often make these worse than they need be by not remembering in time that we shall have to be away.

I must own for myself that I have often plunged into doing things which needed my presence without considering what would become of them if I could not be there, tried plants, for instance, which wanted constant watering, or shading, or something or other, and then had to leave them, with the most disastrous results. Sowing seeds, either indoors or out, is one of my worst pitfalls, because most things take a long time to come up, and then if I have to go away—well, I draw a veil over the deplorable seed-trays where nothing has come up but grass, and the patches of annuals spindling for want of thinning, or eaten bodily by slugs ! Here I want to digress for a minute to complain of the way in which raising plants from seed is always said to be so easy, when it is so extremely likely that one will go wrong in it ! What with damping off, and horrid invisible fungus which seems to mow down the seedlings like hay,

and all the other things which *may* happen, it is sometimes surprising that they get through at all. There is one particular danger that one really might be warned against, but nobody ever says anything about it—planting out one's seedlings in autumn before they are big enough. It is always assumed that they will be quite robust enough to stand it, and the selfsown ones mostly are, which makes it all the more provoking when numbers of nice little plants disappear in the winter—and to keep them indoors does not do either. It seems to me that the cold winds hurt them more than frost, and that they will often get through with very rough shelter, if they are only protected from wind. Do you notice the casual way in which one is told to use "a spare frame light" for such things in bad weather, as if everybody had frames or lights by the dozen? Now I have relieved my mind, and can go on again about being away.

I suppose that something has always to be risked, but if one could but cut one's coat according to the cloth, and refrain from attempting so much more than one has any chance of putting through, we might contemplate absence with tolerable calm. Now one comes to think of it, a good deal of Rosemary's advice to the delicate gardeners, as to simplifying their arrangements, and having things which did not need to be always fussed over, could easily

be modified to suit anybody trying to have a Garden Which Could Be Left. Obviously, it would be folly to lay down rules, as each case will differ as to the length of probable absences, how often they would come, and so on, just as each garden differs. Don't you think your flowers are very much like your clothes? You could arrange both so much better if you knew what you were going to do, and especially what the weather was going to be. Even the people who have to take their holidays at a fixed time, have sometimes to leave home on other occasions, and as to those weariful folks who plan out all their movements six months beforehand, and expect the rest of the world to turn out for them, they can't have gardens, or they would learn more wisdom. For a garden will do many things for you, but it does them in its own way, and at its own time. Haven't we all had some plant or other which *always* flowered while we were away, whether we went early or late, and if we stayed at home, it did not flower at all!

However, setting aside such freaks as not to be contended with, I do think we might reduce some of these difficulties by preparing for going away more systematically than we do. If, for example, we arranged anything that would require care during our absence as simply as possible, indicating which plants would want water, or other attentions,

and then were at some pains to explain and show what was meant to the person left in charge, we might prevent many small disasters. It sounds absurdly obvious, but I should hate doing it myself, as I don't explain at all well, still I have no doubt that it would be the right way.

With regard to a gardening man, the most important point seems to be that he should not be a stranger. A strange man takes a long time to find out that you really mean to have a say in your garden matters, no great blame to him either, as he probably has worked for a great many people who did not, and therefore any remarks you might make before going away would go in at one ear and out at the other. Whereas, if he has been in the habit of doing things for you, even if only occasionally, and you have taken trouble to impress on him what you want done, and most especially what you want *not* done, usually he will attend to your wishes fairly well. Not always, of course; there are some men of an ingrained conceit, to whom you may talk till you are black in the face without making any impression, and some who have got so stiffened into a routine of work, that they seem physically incapable of getting out of it. Like a certain old sinner, whom I tolerated till he cut off all the flowering shoots of the Montana clematis, when our relations became strained! It is no use trying to go on with such

people, but you can bring an ordinary man to take in that you want the grass cut while you are away, though not a finger is to be laid on bed or border till your return. With care, you can even get it understood that the daffodil clumps are to be cut round, and not cut off. By the way, would anything but watching over every bulb induce the ordinary gardener to plant daffodils in *clumps* in the grass? What he likes is to set them singly, inches apart from each other; then, of course, it is not possible to clip round each daffodil standing in isolation; so when the grass is long, he says it is untidy, and grass and daffodil leaves are all mown away together weeks before the latter are withered, and the owner wonders why there are no flowers the next year! That, however, is another digression.

If the jobbing man once begins to think your garden pretty, a great point is gained, and he becomes much more ready to tolerate your fancies. I have even got rid of one thing which used to worry me every time I went away in summer; I noticed when I came back that the lawn always looked scarified and miserable, till I insisted, first, that the collecting-box should not be used, and next that the grass should not be swept. Now I know that our soil is light, and the turf not very thick, but I do think that the everlasting sweeping, often with much worn brooms, used to tear and hurt the grass

when the weather was hot and the ground hard and dry. In winter, and when there are leaves to be brushed up, and wormcasts to be scattered, of course it is a very different matter.

In spite of what may go wrong while one is away, in our sort of gardens there is always plenty to rejoice in when one does get back. If one thing has failed, another is flourishing, and if half the garden is shouting for you to come and attend to it, well, perhaps there is something of the mother's feeling who is a little glad that nobody can do for her babies quite so well as herself.

There is another pleasant side, as concerning the garden, in going away: it is a chance to revise your ideas, and pick up fresh ones, as one has often more leisure to consider plans and compare successes and failures with those of other people. Even when staying in a town, there are often many things to be noted, especially since the planting of public parks and gardens has been so much improved. Sometimes they show most excellent ways of dealing with that very difficult time, the later summer, from the middle of July to the end of August. Then if one goes about the country, there is always something to notice in the special beauties of the gardens of different parts, and the way in which things thrive or dwindle according to the situation. And though one cannot see from the train all that Lily can

observe in her neighbours' gardens, there is a great deal to be seen even in passing.

I like very well to take a journey in quite early spring, not only to watch for the first primroses in the woods, but also to see the work beginning in the gardens, the clearing off of winter rubbish, the stirring and digging, just as the ploughing is going on in the fields. And I think the little gardens are the most interesting of all, because one feels that they mean so much to their owners. A warm-hearted artist friend of mine, who has often to pass through very unlovely regions going in and out of London, told me that in the train she always recited a litany of benediction for the flowers of the poor, so I begged her to let me have it for the Guild, with which I will now conclude.

DAISY.

MYRTLE'S SEVENFOLD LITANY

Blessed be the glowing nasturtiums which run riot in tiny backyards, and throw glorious fringes over the smuttiest walls, and hang from crazy window-ledges, and have even been seen growing in an old top-hat !

Blessed be the royal purple irises growing in a wilderness of railway lines, where trains all but brush their broad leaves a hundred times a day.



THE BROAD-LEAVED IRIS

Growing too in gardens of empty houses, and glorifying the whole dull road with their splendour.

Blessed be the merry marigolds, coming up of freewill on rubbish heaps, and in waste places where other flowers give up in despair.

Blessed be the broad sunflowers, building up their stately stems in the most unlikely places, and glorifying the most utterly dismal surroundings.

Blessed be the little muskplants, making fragrant soft-green and gold spots in dark and dreary windows.

Blessed be the clinging Virginian creepers, climbing up tall chimneys, and draping the most commonplace houses and most hideous sheds in robes of lovely green, to flame out in autumn in crimson and purple.

And Blessed above all be the wildings from the country, which steal into the heart of London along all the railway banks, and send flying seeds to every vacant spot, there to come up, and remind the town dwellers that the Great Mother has not forgotten them ! Amen.

FROM VIOLET

I AM not proposing a problem of my own this time, but there is a matter on which I should be very glad of the advice of the Guild ; it is a sad story. Among my more distant neighbours there is a couple called Underwood ; the husband had some business, I forget what it was, and, moreover, painted extremely well—some of the sketches I have seen are beautiful. He had a terrible fall while on a sketching expedition, and in consequence is very much crippled—I am not sure that he can walk at all. Fortunately they have good means, so that he can have all the possible alleviations, and he may still recover to some extent, but it is very slow. He is marvellously uncomplaining and cheerful, manages by dint of a specially arranged chair and stand even to paint a little, and otherwise occupy himself, which seems to make it all the more pathetic. There are only two children, boys, who are at school, and Mrs. Underwood is a dear, good soul, who would give her eyes to help her husband in any way. She was very much taken with Lavender's paper, which I happened to show her, and asked me to let her copy

some of it. A few days ago she told me that she had been thinking over the suggestion about the views from the windows, and thought something might be done in this way for Mr. Underwood's benefit, but she was no gardener, and could I help her? I said I would try to collect some ideas for her, so will you all meditate upon the facts, as far as I can give them to you, and perhaps put together any suggestions which occur to you, as she would only be puzzled by separate schemes? The house is a good one, and Mr. Underwood chiefly uses a very pleasant room on the ground floor, with a south-westerly aspect for the principal window, a deep bay one. We need not think of the smaller side window, as there is a very tolerable outlook from it already, and it is not much used. I should say that the bay window is about three feet from the ground. Outside it there is a narrow border in which are some good roses and other climbers, trained up the walls, and then a paved path. On the left there is a fair-sized flower bed, seen from the side of the bay; on the right the path goes to some bushes, which screen off the carriage drive, and across the path is the lawn, of which the main feature is a group of fir trees to the right, far enough away not to shadow the house. Mrs. Underwood thinks that these fine trees are spoilt by a bed of lilacs and such shrubs, which hide the lower part

of the trunks, but she is afraid to clear this away, because it makes a good shelter when her husband is able to sit out. The flower garden proper takes most of the remaining width of the lawn ; there are standard roses, not very good ones, each in a tiny bed to itself in a row by the path, and some good beds and borders planted in a very commonplace way—rather poor bedding out. Beyond that is a good stretch of lawn, very well kept, where the sons play tennis in the holidays, shut in by what seems to me the worst thing in the place, a belt of overgrown shrubs, much too thickly planted, and most uninteresting. This belt or hedge shuts out a bit of pretty coppice beyond, and also, I fancy, a peep of the open country. There is an excellent old gardener, quite devoted to his master, who wears himself out trying to force fruit and vegetables at queer times of year, in case Mr. Underwood should fancy them. That's rather touching, I think.

VIOLET.

Suggestions in answer, put together by Rosemary.

DEAR VIOLET,—

Mrs. Underwood's wish to improve her poor husband's outlook would appeal to any one, and we shall be delighted if we can be of any use to her. Lily, who was staying with me when I got your letter, made a sort of diagram from your description,

which was a great help in keeping the important points before us. She, Heather and Daisy all contributed ideas, and asked me to combine them with mine, as you proposed. There are so many good points about the Underwood garden, that it could be made really charming without any great difficulty.

To begin with the narrow border, as it cannot be much seen from the window, we propose that the space not occupied by the roots of the creepers should be devoted to low-growing scented plants, mignonette, nightstock, heliotrope, or anything else suitable, with an edging of that delicately perfumed viola, Pembroke. Then the bed on the left, which will be seen near at hand, must be carefully planted. We agree that under the peculiar circumstances, permanent planting would be out of place, though a permanent edging, and possibly a group of ferns, or small evergreen bush, would hold the rest of the planting together. But the main part of the bed should change with the seasons, spring bulbs and flowers being replaced by summer ones, and these again by autumn flowering plants, chrysanthemums, for instance, till the bulbs could be planted again. Of course, the lifted plants need not be wasted ; carefully taken up and replanted to complete their growth, they could be used again, or else transferred to another part of

the garden. Mrs. Underwood is quite right about the fir trees, and she need not be afraid of clearing away the bushes, if she will provide one of the capacious basketwork shelters, now made for invalids, which would really be a better protection from draughts than anything growing could be, and might be moved about the garden as required. The great stems of the firs ought certainly to be visible all the way up, and Heather says that if the place now occupied by the bushes is levelled, and sown with fine-leaved grasses, it will look better than laid down with sods in the ordinary way.

Now about the flower beds ; we take it for granted that there are some in the space to the right, between the trees and the path, else the plan would be rather lop-sided. Would it be possible to abolish the unsatisfactory standard roses, and throw all the little beds into one ? We think that you, knowing the garden and the district, will be able to advise better on the actual selection of plants than we can, so we restrict ourselves to the leading ideas of what would be best to do.

In the first place, the beds at the furthest right and left had better be treated slightly differently from those of the middle space, which are directly in front of the window, and therefore the most seen. The main principle would be in all much the same as in the bed close to the house, some perman-



MR. UNDERWOOD'S FIRS

ent features, the rest changed as required. It will be important in the middle beds not to allow anything large enough to block the outlook, though some tall lilies or cannas might be placed there with excellent effect, as a dead level is very dull. Permanent edgings would be very desirable (the winter heath, *Erica carnea*, makes a charming edging all the year round), and some grey-leaved or evergreen bushes of low growth, such as the dwarf lavender, and small cistus, would make a pretty setting for spring and summer flowers. The danger is that too many kinds of plants might be put together, and make a crowded or spotty effect, very teasing to the eye of an artist : this could be avoided by letting one kind of plant predominate though in several varieties, as, for instance, using mostly primroses of all sorts one spring, and wallflower and forget-me-not the next. Except for a ring of crocuses outside the edgings, spring bulbs would be better omitted from these beds. In summer there might be a free use of plants grown in pots and plunged, if only a few kinds of flowers were set together, with plenty of handsome foliage to enhance their beauty. In the right and left beds taller and more bushy plants could very well be used, and the permanent element might be increased ; such stately forms as hollyhock and larkspur and *Romneya* could be introduced with great advantage, while there could be fine

masses of narcissus, tulips, etc., in springtime, if the size and position of the beds were suitable. But whatever plants are chosen, be sure that there is plenty of white in all the beds, for we specially want this part of the garden to be cheerful, enlivening, gay, in the best sense, and a flower parterre where white is lacking in good measure, is as heavy as a bad stained-glass window, and half the brilliancy of the coloured flowers is lost. The solemn firs will supply the necessary restful element, and the cheery flower beds must do the rest. This seems a case for winter bedding out, as far as regards the middle beds ; the side ones would do with "carpets." But we feel a little diffident in advising on this point, as none of us are strong on it. Of the plants generally so used, the best we can think of are small variegated hollies, aucubas, and lauristinus, grown in pots and plunged ; don't dream of cypresses, they do so suggest a doll's graveyard !

That hedge belt certainly needs strong measures ; we should like to get rid of most of it, keeping anything that might be pretty good (sometimes one finds tolerable laburnums in such a shrubbery), and having an irregular planting of flowering shrubs or trees, with a few good evergreens to replace it. The grouping of these would a good deal depend on what there is to be blocked out, but we propose to make a special feature by using fruit trees, apple

crab, cherry, medlar, plum, and quince, at the end of the lawn where the coppice will show when the belt is gone. These should stand well apart, and above all things, if the glimpse of open country can possibly be obtained, it should be kept absolutely sacred, whatever else was given up. A real outlook is such a relief to an imprisoned invalid. It strikes me that Mr. Underwood might like to use his trained faculties in arranging these groups to please himself. Plenty of daffodils might grow round the fruit trees, and if it were possible to see the ground in the coppice, what a chance it would be to plant sheets of bluebells !

Daisy reminds me to say that the fruit trees are more recommended from the point of view of blossom than for the fruit, though this might be acceptable too. Wishing Mrs. Underwood all success,

(Signed for the others) ROSEMARY.

Part of a letter from Violet.

I sent you Mrs. Underwood's grateful thanks for all your trouble, but now I must tell you of the unexpected success of our joint scheme, though, of course, no work has been done in the garden yet. Mr. Underwood is quite charmed with the idea of directing operations from his window, and is studying catalogues, and looking up garden books, and

making designs, and only wonders he never thought of it before ! Mrs. Underwood is almost too pleased to speak of it, poor dear woman. The old gardener is a little bewildered at the prospect, but says to her secretly, “ Mrs. Underwood ma’am, if it amuses the master to have a row of cabbages in front of the library window, I’ll put ’em in with pleasure.” Could devotion go further ?

VIOLET.

WILD BITS

BY HEATHER

DEAR SISTERS OF THE GUILD,—

While I was away looking after my uncle this autumn, I had a good deal of time to spare, and so amused myself with some very miscellaneous garden literature which had accumulated in his library. The largest part of it consisted of Gardeners' periodicals of various kinds, some dated quite early in last century. There were a great many interesting things in them, though often the style was very technical and dry, evidently only intended for the profession and experts, so that it was not attractive to the outsider. Certainly we modest folk, who are neither professionals nor experts, get much more help in these days, than did previous generations, yet I wish I were nearly as good a botanist as my grandmother, and it seems to have been quite a usual study in her time. Now when it would be a great help in garden work, it seems to be seldom taught to girls, but one has to puzzle it out for oneself.

In reading these old journals, I could not help noticing how often new things, new fashions came

up, were hailed as triumphs of growing knowledge, or of "elegant taste," to be accepted everywhere, and then gradually disappeared altogether, exactly as it happens to-day. Perhaps "disappeared altogether" is a wrong expression, as there was often something good in the new fashion, which lasted and blended with other things, long after the craze for it had died away. Dean Hole has recorded the outburst of delight with which the introduction of the bedding out system was hailed. "The novel and brilliant appearance of large groups of plants out of doors, which had hitherto been only seen singly in pots under glass, brought a new sensation to all sorts and conditions of men and women." Though he afterwards saw the defects of the system, and reverted in practice to the older type of garden, he always maintained that there were great possibilities in it, when used in suitable places and circumstances. Now what I should much like, would be for some really wise garden person, who knew what he was talking about, and had some regard for the King's English (for as we know, the two things do not always go together, worse luck !) to go through the more important fashions which have prevailed in gardening, and, without raving at their absurdities, of which we may have had more than enough, to show us what good has resulted from each, when the craze and the inevitable reaction had both

spent themselves. It would require no little knowledge and judgment to do this, but if it could be done, it might bring us to a more modest and grateful way of thinking of our predecessors than is common at present, and would possibly keep us from the pitfalls which are sure to be found in each succeeding fashion as it has its day.

To illustrate what I mean, I myself think the fashion of carpet bedding a most stiff and stupid way of using plants, and I well remember, in the days when it was at full height of popularity, seeing a large piece of ground laid out in this way, and thinking it the ugliest thing I had ever set eyes on, to be called a garden. Yet I have no doubt that any one really well up in the subject, could point out much good that has come out of this fashion, in the way of increased cultivation of stonecrops and saxifrages, and other classes of plants which were used for it, and which can now be treated in more natural styles, to our great advantage.

When the really beautiful idea of wild gardening was introduced to the public, it suffered just as much from becoming a fashion as the less admirable forerunners had done. People jumped at it as something new and easy, which was to work wonders in all sorts of impossible places. Perhaps the fervour and vivid imagination of the originator of the plan had something to do with this, but any way, they let

themselves be carried off by a notion, without either the requisite knowledge or taste to apply it, and the results were often disastrous in spoiling wild places and woods which had better have been left alone. Then came a reaction, and a new toy was wanted by the fashion devotees, while the wiser heads took counsel, and went slowly, and then found what delightful possibilities wild gardening really held when practised in the right place, and in the right way. They also found that it meant a good deal of trouble, but was well worth it. I can imagine that the revulsion from set and stiff ways in the garden, disposed people of quick perception to a readier appreciation of the free grace of nature in wild places, and made possible that pleasant, gradual transition from regular flower garden, through well ordered shrubbery to beautiful woodland, which we see in some of the best gardens in these days.

Now the wild garden idea may work in two ways: the garden, meaning thereby the cultivation of plants for pleasure, may go into the wild, or something of the wild may come into the garden. It is not given to all of us to have copses and fields to play with, but it is possible to have something of the charm of free nature in very limited space. My Guild Sisters being reasonable and understanding people, will not suspect me of wanting anything sham, like Mrs. Rafferty's garden in *The Absentee*,

with "a little taste of everything," though indeed nature was the only thing that poor woman did not want. You remember the "little hermitage full of earwigs, and a little ruin full of looking-glass!" And I am not thinking of anything even "frankly make-believe," as Miss Jekyll says of many rock gardens; what I have in mind is the number of bits and corners occurring in most moderate-sized gardens, which are unsuited for beds and borders, and the other ways in which we mostly grow our flowers. Take, for instance, a long straight piece of garden with one or two trees in the middle of it; under the trees there might be a "wild bit." Or another long strip, of which I know several examples, where a clump of bushes near the extreme end shelters the garden from the road beyond; between such bushes and the fence might be quite a good "wild bit." Or sometimes, in a steeply sloping garden, there is an awkward little platform in a corner, where nothing looks right grown in the usual way, but which will make a charming "wild bit." It is not very easy to define a wild bit, as it must by no means look neglected or slovenly, and while it is quite informal with neither beds nor paths, the plants growing there must not be tumbled in anyhow, but planted with consideration. What is wanted is that everything shall seem to grow naturally. In nine times out of ten such places are wasted by being blocked

up by bushes crowded together, or by an attempt to grow some plant which requires a different cultivation, and therefore is always weakly and unhappy looking, which is a pity, as wild bits can be both pretty and interesting, if rightly treated.

The planting of them must depend to great extent on the character of the ground. The tree-shaded strip mentioned above would most naturally have the plants grouped about the trees so as to avoid the large roots, and the best things to use would be those which are found in such a situation, primroses, wood-ruff, foxgloves, etc., with some early spring bulbs or tubers, as winter aconites or scillas. Soil, aspect, shelter and so on would affect the choice of plants, but especially where there are trees or bushes in a wild bit, one turns by instinct either to native plants, or to those which harmonize well with them, otherwise it begins to look only like a border gone wrong. I do not forget that Forbes Watson warned us against growing wild flowers in our gardens, giving as his reason that their beauty was so much reduced by being removed from their proper setting, that we should be in danger of thinking them really inferior. There is truth in this, no doubt, but at the same time there is something else to be said, without pausing on the point that many of our native flowers are now quite familiar in garden surroundings. I do not mean that I would like to set a clump of wood hya-

cinths in a trim border edged with box, but one reason why a wild bit is a valuable possession, is that it gives us a place where we can see such lovely wildings without any jar to our feelings, and enjoy the intense pleasure of association. The one clump of bluebells does not stand alone ; each time the slender, drooping flowers appear they bring back the picture of wide sheets of blue, only broken by fern fronds, in some glorious woodland, seen perhaps once, but never forgotten. No flowers can have closer and more intimate associations than some of the wild ones, and it is a rare pleasure to have even a few of these beloved friends of other days near under our hand, where we can see them grow and remind us of all their wild sisters from day to day, and nobody can interfere between us ! There is another thing, too : it is a great comfort to have a bit of the garden which we need not take too seriously. Sometimes the " garden conscience " wants a rest ! Oh yes, I know all about " the meanest flower " and the thoughts it brings, but sometimes it doesn't, and I want to play and make-believe with the dear things, just as I used to do, and probably shall go on doing as long as I do anything. There is such a thing as ponderous gardening, and it is a mistake.

The trouble to which a wild bit is liable is that sometimes plants will grow too riotously, or we may try to have more than the space will bear, and

we have to come in and restrain and remove, but we can often permit delicious tangles, such as the two-flowered everlasting pea produces, which would be inadmissible in a regular border. Here it does no harm, for the light growth is all cleared off in winter, and nothing is the worse of it. Have you ever seen bluebells growing through woodruff when both are in flower? A daintier combination of blue, white and green is hardly to be seen anywhere.

When the wild bit is without trees or bushes, the grouping of the plants is a little more difficult, but good masses of bold foliage, such as iris, or day-lily, are a great help; the evergreen Gladwin iris is particularly useful, as the leaves are handsome all the winter. In country gardens wild bits might seem to be superfluous with natural wildness outside the garden, and perhaps as much ground inside as can well be attended to, nevertheless, I do see bits and scraps of ground in many country gardens which are allowed to become neglected and overrun with weeds, to the infecting of the tended space, but which would be well worth treating in this way. If my friend the Little Lady can carry out Rosemary's suggestions, she will have most delightful wild bits on a large scale.

There is another sort of garden between town or suburb, and real country, where there is room for this form of garden pleasure. If you go to any of

the pretty old towns of England, or even to the larger villages, you are certain to see some good-sized modern houses, standing well back from the roads which they fringe, each with a proportion of garden ground about it, giving an air of comfortable prosperity to the neighbourhood. Where the country has originally been a wooded one, some trees are usually left standing near the houses, greatly to the improvement of their appearance. Fences rather than walls generally divide the gardens, and it is of the ground immediately inside these fences that I am thinking. Now I have no desire to have a fence or paling always in view, as you know who helped me to cover up ours, but there are worse things to look at, and I cannot understand the morbid terror which seems to prevail among the designers of these gardens, lest a foot of the fencing should be visible from the house or grounds! This, at least, is the only reason that I can imagine for the arrangement generally adopted, which is as follows. Inside the paling, and along the length which skirts the ornamental part of the garden, runs a "shrub border" so to speak, perhaps from ten to twenty feet wide, and usually a path beside it. This border may or may not have trees included in it, but the rest of its space is given up to shrubs, always thickly massed close to the front, so that they resemble a wall as you pass along the path. They certainly hide the offending

boundary, but it is difficult to say what other purpose they serve, as they are far too much entangled to thrive, and at the front, where alone they reach light and air, they have to be clipped on account of the path. It is really sad, after Mr. Robinson and others have exhausted themselves in explaining and denouncing the wasteful folly of thick planting of shrubs, to see it going on as badly as ever. Surely any gardener ought to know how a good rhododendron grows, and how much of its beauty depends on allowing the spreading branches room to develop themselves, and carry the handsome trusses, and yet I have counted *six* large plants crushed together in a space which would not have been too ample for one. The most singular point of all is that the rest of the depth of the border behind these big masses is entirely wasted. Looking through some leafless bush, you see spindling saplings pining for light and air, starved bushes, dead wood, and possibly one or two trunks of the original trees, which had grown tall enough before the shrubs were planted not to be hurt by them.

If anybody arrives on the scene, and tries to thin out something of this tangle, it is too late, as the distorted, twisted branches of the bushes only show more when some of the number have been taken away, but as a rule, it is all accepted as quite the natural and inevitable thing to have. Yet what



WHITE BROOM IN SHRUB BORDER

delightful wild bits might be made by clearing away almost all of the impervious front wall of shrubs, only leaving one here and there which showed signs of recovering a tolerable shape when given a chance. Then of the rest, some might be moved right back to the paling, if not too old to be transplanted, where their misshapen forms might be trained to the fence, and so they would be turned into wall shrubs. Many shrubs make excellent wall coverings, and most of the fence might really be hidden in this way, with the assistance of fine-leaved ivy, or other creepers. All sickly stuff would be completely stubbed up, and the tree-trunks revealed, so adding the width of the border to the size of the garden. Then what pretty plantings there might be in the cleared spaces, according to the capabilities of the soil and aspect. There would be room for flowering bushes, such as broom, or the beautiful azaleas, and carpetings of the many creeping bushes which are so pretty, Partridgeberry, Gaultheria, etc., or the simple spring flowers which have already been spoken of. That would be a matter of choice, but the gain to the garden beauty and pleasure could be immense.

For those who have the space, and the power of carrying it out, the idea of a little garden only for our native flowers is a very pretty one. I have never actually seen it done, but I have heard of one being successfully made with no great trouble, principally

by collecting seeds, and sowing them carefully. Even a border given up to wild flowers would be pleasant if one had the time to give to it, which at present I have not.

HEATHER.

A PROBLEM FROM DAISY

MY Sisters, congratulate me. I have reclaimed that nice little square of ground leading to the kitchen garden, where there were old black currant bushes, which were not much good. At last they got a disease—swelled head, was it ? no, big bud I think—any way they had all to be burnt, and Dick, who looks after all that sort of thing, said I might have that plot to play with. So now I want to have a Garden of Scent. Please suggest things,—I don't think I really dislike anything very much in the open air, except some bushes which there would not be room for in any case. I want you to think of the less obvious things, and also of some scented flowers which have good colour, many of the indispensable ones are so pale. There will be room for one tree, I think a fruit tree, in the middle, low hedges for two of the sides, and palings for the other two, borders and paved paths inside. As a beginning, there is a big elder-bush some yards away, and honeysuckle which can run over an arch at one of the two little gates,

Your much excited

DAISY,

The solutions were edited by Rosemary, who struck out all duplicate proposals.

Violet's Solution.

Sweetbrier hedges, Wichurariana type and hybrid May Queen roses trained on the fences. For colour, Caroline Testout and Viscountess Folkestone roses, yellow Sweet Sultan, and day-lilies. Lemon thyme and musk carpeting.

VIOLET.

Heather's Solution.

Blenheim Orange is a most delicious smelling apple blossom, and has lovely colour besides. Then night-scented evergreen Daphne, nightstock, deep red bergamot. Polyanthus narcissus under the tree, Grand Monarque for choice, and grape hyacinths. Madonna lilies, Florentine and Pallida irises.

HEATHER.

Lily's Solution.

Evening primrose, auriculas, clematis flammula to mix with the honeysuckle, lemon balm, scented Violas. Could there be a lime tree a little way off?

LILY.

Rosemary's Solution.

For both scent and colour, Old Clove and Sir ^WR. Waldie Griffith carnations, also Gloire de Nancy.

All sorts of pinks, sweet scabious, Wallflower Tobacco, hyacinths, moss rose, Poet's narcissus, Sylvestris and Persica tulips.

ROSEMARY.

Daisy's Answer.

A thousand thanks, dearest Sisters, for so many charming suggestions. Some things I had thought of, but of many not at all. Now I am making out my list, and beginning to consider how many can possibly be got in, with the Blenheim Orange for a centre piece. I might have thought of that for myself from the bit in *Days and Hours in a Garden*. "To inhale a cluster of Blenheim Orange gives back youth for just half a minute after. It is not merely that with the perfume the heart goes back to remembered times—it is a real, absolute elixir."

So you will have all to come and smell it. Yes, Lily, there are big limes within smelling distance, but not near enough to spoil the "Garden of Scent" with honey dew.

DAISY.

THE WANDERING GARDENER

BY VIOLET

DEAR GUILD SISTERS,—

I have been following Lily's example lately in paying attention to my neighbours' ways with their gardens, and like her, I have found much to interest me. By the way, I have also found what I never expected, a place where I have really liked the much abused privet. This was the way of it : my laundress has a very attractive old-fashioned sort of cottage, raised a few feet above the level of the roadside, and in front of it what my small niece May calls "Such a *twinkly* little garden." Which word does credit to the child's powers of description, for it exactly expresses the way in which some bright, unexpected thing peeps at you from every corner of the tiny place. Moreover this cottage garden certainly bears out all that Rosemary says about having plenty of white if one wants flowers to look gay ; there is always something white in it, and it is the liveliest little spot possible. On the left hand as one goes in is the drying green, a long square enclosed

by a hedge of privet, which is always kept so well clipped that handkerchiefs and other small things can be spread out to dry on the soft leaves without any fear of being caught or torn. At the upper corner of the far end of the green is a huge bush of privet, so big and old that it is almost a tree, and the gnarled branches have grown picturesque. It still flowers to a limited extent, and when one sees it standing out against the blue sky, it seems to justify its existence, and there is a homely charm about the whole little enclosure.

But, of course, most of my observations have been among the modern houses, and one point has struck me particularly. I had often noticed that many of the smaller houses—villas, I suppose they call themselves—on the way to the town changed hands pretty frequently, but the fact had not specially impressed me, as, from various causes which I need not specify, there is a good deal of coming and going in the neighbourhood. However, looking at them now from a different point of view, I can't help wondering what people who have to lead a wandering life do about their gardens? They must do something, as Rosemary pointed out in her first paper, for all these small houses have gardens of a sort. It is a matter outside our own experience mostly, as we are all fairly settled people, and no doubt we get into the way of counting on time to

help us. Perhaps we even plume ourselves a little on having learnt to be patient, and on doing things slowly when needful, which may be excusable, seeing how difficult both those arts are. Somebody says that a garden must have money, time, and trouble, if there is plenty of two of these things, you can get along with very little of the third, which no doubt is true. But it looks to me as if many of these migratory neighbours of mine had to put up with only one of these requisites, for time they obviously have not, and nobody would live in these scrubby little houses who had plenty of money. I suspect too that some of what little there is goes in unsatisfactory ways, as far as the garden is concerned, for if anything is done after one of these migrants has alighted, it is a hasty sticking in of common bedding plants. Far be it from me, though, to join in the ungrateful chorus of disparagement of the familiar triad, *Geranium*, *Calceolaria*, and *Lobelia* ; each is a dear friend of mine, who has been abominably treated, and I could add a clause to *Myrtle's Litany* for all three !

Dear longsuffering *Geranium*, so willing to fill up spaces anywhere, coming to the rescue when annuals have failed us, and biennials are nothing but legs ! So delightful in big pots in the sunshine, so friendly in the cottage window, only asking not to be frozen, and coming out afresh in the spring to make new

cuttings, and help us again, I am not going to be faithless to you.

Dear bright *Calceolaria*, who gave me "fairy purses" when I sat beside you in a short frock on the grass and opened all your tiny lids, and who went flowering on and on till frost came, was it your fault that you were maltreated, and set in stiff rows to bake in the sun till your leaves all shrivelled up, and were devoured of caterpillars, poor golden martyr?

Dear generous *Lobelia*, doing your lovely blue best for people who grew you in chunks, and sold you by the yard, and expected you to be happy in gravel and sand, shall I forget how you have ever responded to me when I found you a peat bed, and how your leaves lay out like green lace, and your delicate sprays flourished alike in wet and dry? Did you ask to be made "compact" and spoken of as a "stripe" as if you were paint? You know that I love you, and therefore in some mysterious way your seedlings manage to get through the winter, coming up and opening blue eyes just where I least expect to see them!

But while I stand up for my mishandled friends, I do not pretend to think them the best plants for the wandering gardeners to fly to on all occasions. When one realizes that there must be a great many of this wandering tribe, it seems curious that their wants should be so generally ignored, but except for

Miss Jekyll's chapter on "Gardening for short tenancies," mostly intended for dwellers in the Aldershot district, I do not remember any definite attempt to deal with the subject.

While I was turning these things over in my mind, Mrs. Underwood came to see me, and brought a cousin with her, whom she introduced by saying, "Mrs. Merrilees, Violet could make flowers grow on a new brick wall!"

"Well, one could always hang up a pocket with a trailer in it," Mrs. Merrilees said, her pretty brown eyes twinkling with fun, and we made friends at once.

Mrs. Rose Merilees more resembles one of the sturdy little burnet roses which can thrive anywhere, than the more luxurious of her namesakes. I could quite fancy her making herself comfortable on a barren moor, or in the sand of the seashore, or any other place where an ordinary rose would give up in despair. She has been very much of a wanderer, not from choice, but from circumstances, and often, too, in that most uncomfortable state of not knowing when she might have to move on, but it does not seem to have hurt her. "I've always had my garden," she said; "sometimes it was only in a little box, but I had it all the same, and there's a good deal of enjoyment to be got out of a square foot of earth. Not that earth is always to be had

in towns. I remember making friends with a potato merchant, and getting him to give me what was shaken out of his sacks : it wasn't bad soil at all."

Whereby I judge that money used to be scarce with her. Now things seem fairly prosperous, and she is really able to settle at last, not very far from us, so that I can develop our acquaintance. Nobody could be a better authority about wandering gardeners, so I have been asking her about it, and tried to set down the substance of our talks.

" Yes, I should know something about that kind of gardening," she said, " I've had to do it myself, and seen a good many others do it, more or less. There are more wanderers than one might think, besides those who are obliged to go here or there, as soldier folk must do. There are the really restless people who always get tired of the place they are in, and fancy somewhere else would be perfection—they never get wiser, poor souls—and the people who spend their lives looking for somewhere to live in, though, as a matter of fact, they often stay long years in one place, meaning all the time to leave it. I knew a man who had a house by the month for twenty years, because he didn't like to feel tied ! "

" Wasn't that very expensive ? "

" About double the proper rent, I should fancy. He wasn't very consistent, for his garden was just as much arranged for a whole season as his neigh-

bours' ! Then, as well as the wanderers, there are temporary people—I mean those who usually have a settled home, but come to some other place for a few months or years for health, or education, or some professional appointment ; altogether there are a good many knocking about the world.”

“ Isn't gardening very difficult if you have to wander ? ”

“ Well, it is, in some ways, but still it holds good that “ Life goes best with those that take it best.” You have this disadvantage, both in houses and gardens, that you have often small choice, unless you have more money than is usual with the sort of wanderers we have in mind, and if you get a house that will do, you must put up with the garden, whatever it is. Then you generally succeed somebody else, often a long succession of somebodies—certain houses get a trick of short tenancies, I think—and then you have to reckon with all the various doings and misdoings of your predecessors. Such queer things as one falls heir to in these gardens, perhaps well planted in the first place, but then not seen to at the right time ! I remember finding a good hybrid perpetual rose literally growing under a yew tree ! It was delightful to move it, and some others nearly as illplaced, out into air and sunshine, and spread their poor starved roots in good soil. How they did grow and enjoy themselves ! In the same

garden, one of the occupiers had blocked the best windows with evergreen bushes ; he was so afraid that flowers would be stolen, that he wouldn't have any : which struck me as a curious way of having a garden. On the other hand, you have not the preparatory work to think of, which must be done when the garden is new, and which takes a long time. That is all very well when you can reckon on staying where you are—I am enjoying making an addition to my garden here quite enormously—but to be set down on a piece of raw ground, with the chance of having to go in a few months, would be disheartening."

" Did you ever have that experience ? "

" No, and I don't think that it often happens, though I do remember a young couple who had to take a bran new house, though they did not expect to stay a year in it, and the garden was a bit of ploughed field, with a wire fence round it. Luckily they were very energetic, and they filled it with all the annuals they could think of, mostly large growing ones, and covered the wires with scarlet runners. Of course, a great many failed, and it was all very funny, but it had such a barbaric glory of colour as I have scarcely ever seen, through all that first summer, and as things turned out, my friends ended by staying there, and made the place really pretty. But that was quite an exceptional case. Generally

when I went to look at a fresh house, I felt I knew what to expect after the first glance."

"I suppose people are very different in the way in which they go to work on these gardens?"

"I used to think that they fell mostly into two or three classes. Those who had some interest in the matter, and also some knowledge; those who wanted to have a garden, but knew very little about it; and those who only wanted to pass muster. The last set, who generally complained most of the necessary expense of the garden, almost invariably treated it in the most expensive way."

"Isn't that very apt to happen when people expect only to stay a short time?"

"Yes, that is very common. Time and again I have watched new-comers, with the idea that they were only going to stay a year, fill the little front garden with tender plants, useless after a few months, while for the money they spent they might have had plenty of biennials and annuals, and made a good beginning of a permanent stocking of the garden with hardy plants, in case they stayed on. Moreover they would then have had good plants to take with them, if they had to go, and the garden would have been pleasant all the time."

"Don't the landlords bother sometimes about taking plants away?"

"Not often in practice. In theory, everything

planted in the ground becomes part of the freehold, but naturally that does not apply to such plants as one is often moving about, and one would not want to move rose-bushes very frequently, as they would probably die. However, to make all safe, I used to get a written permission to take away anything I had put in, provided the garden was left in good order. Indeed, it would be very much better if landlords looked more after their houses when they are unlet, but their idiotcy (or that of their agents) in the matter of gardens passes belief. Either the place is left entirely neglected and overgrown, to be hacked into shape when somebody is found willing to take anything so unattractive—sometimes these houses stand empty for years—more usually some sort of gardener is told to put it tidy, and as there is no supervision, he does so by recklessly digging up everything not too difficult to lift, and taking it away. Whether he appropriates this plunder, I could not say, it sometimes seems more like sheer wanton destruction, as if the man were too ignorant to know the value of what he was ruining.”

I know Mrs. Merrilees was not exaggerating about this. I saw one of the best small gardens near here entirely ruined in this way, after being left stocked with many things which I would gladly have bought, if there had been a chance of doing so, and it has never looked decent since,

“ That is one reason why one generally finds such poor gardens,” she went on. “ I was always so glad when I could hand mine over to the next tenant, and generally I was able to do so, but there is a danger even here, unless the new-comer is on the spot and watchful. The house probably needs doing up inside or out, and there is a kind of workman who positively revels in doing wilful damage to a garden, if he has a chance. Not only have I known creepers torn right down, that the windows might be painted a little more easily, and shrubs broken or roughly pulled up to get into some corner, but bulbs and plants have been dragged up by the hundred, and flung away, just because no one was looking after them.”

“ That seems as if it must have been deliberate malice,” I said.

“ I hardly think that,” she answered; “ more likely it was just a sort of stupid mischief. You come on many queer things when you are a wandering gardener.”

“ Could you say, if you were asked, what was the most important point to consider in that kind of gardening ? ”

“ Yes, I could. Quite unquestionably to my mind, the most important thing is never to let oneself think ‘ It’s not worth while to begin.’ That’s the feeling that paralyzes one, if it once gets in, and



CANTERBURY BELLS

when things are uncertain, and perhaps there may be a change in a few months, it is very hard to keep it out."

"But what would you do in that case?"

"Why, begin, begin at once on something, if it is only making up your mind what is possible to be done—you can do that in midwinter, you know—and clear up and settle as if you knew you were going to stay. Of course, you would not be silly enough to plunge into great works, or run to much expense, but a few packets of seed, and some bulbs or hardy plants, are not much to risk, or even to lose, if you have to go away before you get much good of them. People might use biennials more than they do, I think. It is not a bad plan if you go into a house in winter, to put your main dependence for flowers the first year on biennials and annuals, while you are working up a stock of more permanent things. Canterbury bells and Brompton stocks, for instance, how delightful they are. And though it is a pity to have only tender things, there are some which are very useful to fill up with at first, such as the Paris daisies, which are pretty and last long. But if you let yourself doubt whether it is worth while, you are done for, and may be like some friends of mine, who endured the dullest garden in the world for fourteen years, because they always thought they might be going away! But most of the

wanderers have a fair idea of how long they are likely to be in a place, and, of course, this makes the garden matters much easier to arrange."

"Probably these houses had not much convenience for propagating perennials from seed; how did you manage to get up a stock?"

"Bought, begged, borrowed, exchanged that is, and—no, not stole, but made the most of unconsidered trifles; I've grubbed grass tufts out of the gutter to patch my poor little plot before now, and there is a huge amount of waste stuff in most gardens, if one only could get hold of it. Also there are many little dodges that help with one's seedlings—a packing-case or two and some pieces of glass can be made surprisingly useful, if one knows how to go to work. Then, as I said, I could generally bring a good deal from my last garden, unless there had been a sad interval of going abroad, or living in lodgings. In that case—but I ought to tell you that I have always had most kind friends to help me at a pinch, and many wanderers have not that advantage. My mother began it soon after I married; she was just like the Weeding Woman's Aunt in *Mary's Meadow*; the amount she could get into and out of a small garden was a miracle, and she loved striking cuttings and rearing seedlings for me. And since then, my friends have gone on helping me most generously whenever I needed it."

“ Well, but I am sure that you helped them in return.”

“ Of course, whenever I had anything,” she said quite simply. “ Then some of the wandering gardeners have a great fellow-feeling, and we could exchange, and help each other out. Some were different, not that they grudged the help, but they let their difficulties overwhelm them, and never realized that they could have anything to spare, which was a pity.”

“ Now supposing that you were certain of having the same garden for several years, should you have cared to make any large alteration in it, such as moving paths, and that sort of thing ? ”

“ Given the means, I certainly should, if the change made the garden more convenient, or prettier and less commonplace. For instance, if it were one of those very usual gardens, an oblong shape, with a patch of grass in the middle, a path round it, and a border against all three walls rather overshadowed, I should not hesitate to make the main flower space in the middle, where there would be most light and air, and turn the border into a place for shade-loving plants, with a rockery edging. I think I should reduce the path, *probably*,” she said in a meditative tone, then broke off laughing. “ Just see the force of habit ; here am I planning out all the details as if I were just starting to do it ! ”

I told her that was just what I wanted, and she must tell me some more. I have sometimes thought of the hundreds of gardens that one sees in new suburbs and elsewhere, something of the shape she spoke of, but longer, narrow strips, in fact, at the back of rows of houses, divided by fences, and all exactly like each other, so I asked her what could be done to make these anything but commonplace? She jumped at the problem as if it were a treat. "I've not had to do that for myself exactly, but I've helped friends with it. Of course, something depends on aspect, and if the ground is not dead flat, it is easier to deal with it; but after all, whether a garden is commonplace or not mainly depends on the person working it—the character comes out somehow. I think the most fatal thing is when the owner says, 'Go to, I will be original,' for then it all becomes affected." (I laughed internally, remembering my experiences at Starlands.) "At the same time something *is* wanted to give such gardens features, and if the owners really care about them, and take trouble, they will hit on some idea, often the better for being simple. In one that I helped to arrange, the far end was the sunniest, and a piece at this part of the strip was raised about two feet across the full width, the edge making a little rock bank. This low terrace was large enough for a good bed against the end wall, a path, and a

small border planted with climbing roses trained up pillars not very far apart, and connected near their tops by light poles, along which the roses ran, and dropped their clusters. In addition, many annual climbers, convolvulus, Japanese hop, and so on, were led up the poles and mingled with the roses. This very successful arrangement had been suggested to my friends by some book, but they had so adapted it to their own purposes, that it became entirely theirs. In another such garden, the end was devoted to vegetables, but it was screened off by espalier apple trees, in front of which was a group of small birches, young trees standing well separated from each other—they had a wonderfully light and pretty effect.”

“What about planting trees in such gardens?”

“Well, real forest trees are quite out of place, even if they didn’t take too much out of the ground. These birches did well enough, and I always like laburnum and almond and cherry, but I would be very cautious with evergreens. I used to grow walnuts in pots as table plants, and I have planted them out in small gardens, hoping that as they grow so slowly, they would not do much harm. Another friend tried to arrange one of these featureless gardens in a very formal style. I did not think it quite a success, perhaps it needed a better eye for proportion than she had, and also it suggested an idea of

much labour to keep things right, which was unpleasing, though she did not clip her shrubs, as I am sorry to see that people are beginning to do again, all in the name of design."

I had been distressed by seeing this barbarism praised up lately, and we talked of the amount of labour required to produce such a stupid result.

"Speaking of labour," Mrs. Merrilees said, "there was a garden error which some of my soldier friends were apt to make. If they had an active and zealous soldier servant, they would think to save expense by turning him into the garden to dig, under that queer delusion that a flower bed ought to be treated as much like a cornfield as possible. So the good fellow would set to and dig with military thoroughness, bringing all the bad soil to the top, and burying the good at the bottom, and upturning everything but big bushes which came in his way. Of course, he would not remove a thing, but with the best intentions, he was almost as destructive as the empty-house gardeners we were talking about. I once saw this process just being completed in a garden, which to my knowledge had been most amply stocked with bulbs by the previous tenant. You can imagine how many of them were left after that. Whereas, if that energy and goodwill could only have been properly directed, how much excellent work might have been done! But it's impossible to make

some people understand that digging does not come by nature."

"Yes," I said, "they always say, 'anybody can dig' when they want you to take an 'unemployed' into the garden." My friend gave a gasp.

"My dear," she said, "I hope I'm not a stingy or hardhearted woman towards people in distress, (she really is extraordinarily liberal and would give away her last farthing), "but don't let anybody persuade you that it is charitable to let a man pretend to do work of which he knows nothing. It's a waste of your money which you might use in better ways, because it will probably cost you as much again in repairing the mischief he will have done, as far as you can, that is—some of it will be irreparable—and it is an injury to the man, because you are encouraging him to take pay for bad work."

That struck me as quite true, though I had not had occasion to consider the point before, as Reg. would never tolerate anything of that sort, so I told her my husband would quite agree with her.

"Of course," she went on, "it is quite as possible to be selfish or the other thing about gardening as about anything else, just because one enjoys it so much. I have the greatest admiration for a girl I know, to whom her garden is more than a pleasure, it is a serious study, and yet she is always keeping down her expenses, and going quietly without new

plants and things that she would like to have, in order to help a widowed cousin to educate her children. I don't know that the garden is really any the worse of it; I always feel as if there were something even sweeter than flower scent floating in the air, something like the 'ointment of spikenard,' you know."

The merry brown eyes got soft and wet, and we said no more for a bit.

Now my mind runs on a branch of the Guild especially devoted to the wandering gardeners, to be helped when needed by the settled members, but it will take a great deal of thinking to get it sufficiently into shape to lay before my Sisters. I *am* glad I am not called to be a wandering

VIOLET.

A REQUEST FROM ROSEMARY

THIS time I am going to ask the Members of the Guild to help me with a small undertaking. I am beginning to carry out Heather's suggestion of a Wild Plant Border, and it would be very pleasant if the Members could each collect for me enough to make a patch of two or three kinds of plants. I should prefer to avoid those which have become regular garden inhabitants, such as primroses, foxgloves, wallflower, etc., but British ferns which would grow under garden conditions would be highly acceptable. I ought to explain, that for the moment the names of the contributions are all that I want, as probably they would not all lift well at the same time of year, and we can settle about the sending of them later on. One wild flower has already put herself into the border, a clump of speedwell in the corner of the edge, and there the little beauty shall stay, if she will not prove too rampant.

I need not say that the plants will be all the more welcome, being given by you.

Your grateful in anticipation,

ROSEMARY.

Daisy's List.

My three contributions are going to be, Meadow orchis both purple and pale, Meadowsweet, Blue Geranium.

DAISY.

Violet's List.

My namesakes of the woods (that sounds prettier than dog-violets), then bluebells, and hartstongue ferns.

VIOLET.

Lily's List.

I should like to send Valerian, red and white, purple Campanula, and Succory, if I can get it up. If it won't lift, then Lady's Bedestraw.

LILY.

Heather's List.

Mine will be Harebells, Cranesbill, and yellow Wood Anemone.

HEATHER.

Lavender's List.

I can send you these, Sweet Gale, Woodsorrel, Wild Arums.

LAVENDER.

Rosemary's Answer.

You have been very clever, my dear Sisters, in thinking of so many things, without any of the garden plants, very best thanks to you all. As soon as the border is at all arranged, please all come and see it,

Ever your affectionate

ROSEMARY.

EPILOGUE

THE DAISY-BUD

THE four original Members of the Guild were again gathered together, not now at the Club, but in Daisy's drawing-room, and the centre of attraction was neither plant nor flower, but a white-robed tiny being, sleeping peacefully in Daisy's arms. It was the christening of the first "Daisy-bud" which had brought the friends together, and it was her future that the proud young mother was discussing, as she rested in her great arm-chair.

"Because, you see," she was saying seriously, "there is always the chance of making a child turn against a thing, if she has too much of it. Just suppose if the Bud grew up to dislike the garden!"

"Can't suppose anything of the sort," Violet answered gaily. "You're not a faddy woman, Daisy, and, as far as I see, it is the faddy mothers who disgust their children with their particular fancies."

"No, dear, I don't think you need be anxious about that," said Rosemary; "she may or she may not have a turn for doing the actual work—just

fancy those wee fingers wielding a garden fork ! ” and she broke off to bend tenderly over the little one ; “ but that doesn’t matter, I hope she will grow up to take the flowers as naturally as the air and the sunshine, and there is no better way of making friends with them.”

“ And the making friends is the root of the matter, don’t you think ? ” said Heather. “ Let’s see, how old should the Bud be, to be able to look up into the bell of a properly grown Crown Imperial ? ”

“ That sounds like a rule-of-three sum,” Daisy began to laugh, “ given the height of the Crown Imperial, and the height of baby—but we haven’t got her height, eh ? What a lovely experience it would be though, looking up into the mysterious tears, but perhaps she would have to be older to enter into that.”

“ She can wait to understand tears,” said Violet gently, “ and there will be plenty for her to enjoy while she is growing with the other buds. Daisy, your scent-garden is positively intoxicating. I ran up there just before we went to church, and it was adorable.”

“ Oh, but you must go about sunset, when it is better still, so Dick says at least. I haven’t got so far yet, but I hope I shall soon, and enjoy the success.”

“ By the way,” began Rosemary, “ talking of suc-

cesses, Lavender asked me to tell you how well that plan, which she found in *The Quiver* magazine, of lifting plants just coming into flower, and having them growing in bowls for a while indoors, has answered with her. Not only has she made a real success of it, but some friends of hers, who have a nice little garden in one of the London suburbs, have started a series of bowls to lend to people in lodgings, or scrubby little flats; isn't that a good notion?"

"Quite worthy of the Guild," Violet said; "have you tried it yourself, too?"

"Just for home use," answered Rosemary, "and I find it most convenient for that, as it supplies something growing for one's rooms when the bulbs are mostly over, and it is uncommonly little trouble. Once you have got your bowl of moist earth, it is a mere nothing to lift some little tuft of something, and plant it in. I mostly used violets, primroses, and forget-me-not. The violets had to be changed pretty often, so that made a beginning of clearing away one of my 'winter carpets,' and it was delightful to have them. Much as I have always loved the outdoor violets, I felt as if I had never properly appreciated their colour till I got them on a level with my eyes, and could see the light coming through them. The others were charming too, and lasted longer, especially if the room were not too hot. I had one bowl of primroses in my bedroom,

which went on really a long time, and when I replanted them, they looked as if nothing had happened to them."

Here tea came in, and Rosemary carried off her god-daughter to the nursery. When she came back, Daisy gazed round at her visitors with an air of absolute content. "It was so good of you all to come," she said, "and there is so much that I want to know. Dear President, you don't look as if the Guild were too much for you, but are you quite sure that it isn't, now that it has grown into such a big affair?"

Rosemary smiled serenely. "Honestly, dear Daisy, it is not too much. You see Violet and Rose Merrilees really run the Wanderers' Branch."

"We should get hopelessly stuck without you," Violet interjected.

"But you certainly do most of the work," the President went on, "and now that Lavender has a settled home again, she takes the Invalids' correspondence quite off my hands. Then the small subscription that the Members pay covers the copying of the monthly lists of questions and answers, and wants and supplies, and the liberality of two or three of our Members relieves me of responsibility about the printing of the quarterly papers, so I really do very well, though I certainly did not expect it to grow in this way."

"It has surprised us all, I fancy," Daisy said,

"and there was one thing I never thought of when we began: it did not occur to me that we should find so many links with all sorts and kinds of people, as has somehow come about."

"You were always strong on the human interest, though," Heather said, "and could deduce more of a man's character from his flower beds than I should have thought possible!"

"Perhaps it wasn't possible," said Daisy; "I mean—oh, dear! how difficult it is to express things properly, but I think the more interested you get, the more you revise your first ideas, and see how often you have been mistaken."

"Well, that's all right," said Rosemary; "if there is more sympathy, there should be more insight, and one gets a glimmering of what other people are under the surface."

"And it stops one from being so cock-sure," threw in Violet.

Daisy laughed softly. "That reminds me of something I should like to tell you, though it's a little too personal for the Guild at large. One of the houses on the next road belongs to a tradesman of the name of Loveday, who goes away to his shop every day. I'm afraid I used to turn up my nose a bit at his garden when I passed, and think how hot and staring it was with Vesuvius geraniums and magenta stocks swearing at them, till it occurred to me that

what the good man wanted was some place to stroll up and down while he smoked in the evenings, when all the colours would be softened down, and the stocks would be deliciously sweet. There was nobody to sit in the windows, and be vexed with them all day, so why shouldn't he enjoy himself as he liked, without bothering, even if the possibilities of the garden were wasted? All the same, I was distinctly surprised one autumn day, by being asked if I 'would be so good as to speak to Mr. Loveday?' I thought it would be some local business or message for Dick, but it was nothing of the sort, and my friend was so dreadfully apologetic for troubling me, that it was some time before we arrived at any point, but at last it came out. He had sometimes walked this way, and as he expressed it, 'taken the liberty' of admiring my garden, and in short, he was going to be married at Christmas, and the bride was very fond of her flowers, and could I tell him what he should do to have a nice garden ready for her? It was such a large order that I hastily suggested that perhaps she would like better to arrange it to her own taste when she came, but his face fell dismally at that idea. 'I understood there was a good bit should be done in autumn,' he said so wistfully that I grasped at once that this sober, middle-aged shop-keeper wanted to *do* something for his lady, as much as any knight in a romance. So I assured him that

he was quite right, and undertook, that if he liked, Dick and I would look round his garden, and see what we could advise to be done to make it look nice and promising when the bride came, whereat he was immensely grateful."

"What did Dick say?" asked Heather.

"Oh, Dick always understands," answered the happy Daisy, "especially when he laughs most. He did laugh about this to begin with, and then he said, 'I see, "Romance brought up the nine-fifteen";' and it took me a minute to see how that bore on the situation!"

"And how did you occupy Romance this time?" inquired Violet.

"Luckily there was plenty of straightforward sort of work to be done, which he could easily understand and direct, crowded sickly bushes to be cleared, a few good new ones put in, beds to be properly dug, which I am sure had never been done before, and that sort of thing. He threw quite amazing energy into it all; if he drives on his business in that way, it ought to do well. The gardener who had supplied (and cheated) him for years, told him that *he* could not go by what a lady said. 'Then I'll have some one who can,' said the lover, and did it!"

"Capital," said Violet, "and what did you do in the business?"

“Not so very much, as there was the future mistress to be considered. But I abolished a horrible rockwork, all made up of that vitrified stuff which always looks slimy, and with a very few real stones it was turned into quite a pretty mound, with daffodils and trailers, and some small bushes. I thought the best way with the beds and borders would be to provide edgings, and a sort of framework of permanent things for the bride to fill up as she liked. Mr. Loveday was very anxious for a rose-bed, and it was easy to make a beginning with roses that everybody likes, but I would not fill it too full. I put plenty of crocuses and snowdrops and aconites into the beds in front of the house, and carpets of various kinds, so that they should look furnished, and make a good first impression. There was a little greenhouse, which was put into order, and I potted up some of the best of the bedding geraniums, and with some cuttings and things of my own, and bulbs in pots, it looked quite nice. Finally I educated some Roman hyacinths to come out at the right time, and sent them to be in the drawing-room when the pair arrived at home.”

“Just like you, Daisy,” said Heather, “and what did the bride turn out to be?”

“Why, she was as nice and simple a girl as ever you saw. I met them by accident, just outside their gate, the day after they came home, and his

beaming face, and her pretty, shy manner were a pleasure to see. I went round the garden with her, and she thanked me for my trouble in the nicest way possible, confiding to me that after being used to a country garden, she had been rather anxious about what she should find in her new home. What pleased me best, was that she was evidently quite as grateful for what I had *not* done, as for anything else in the business."

"Yes, that is quite comprehensible when one comes to think of it," said Rosemary; "but it was very clever of you, Daisy, to manage it all so pleasantly for her, and to satisfy the good man at the same time."

"Oh, I don't know about that,"—Daisy blushed very prettily,—"it interested me at the time, and we have kept up our garden relations ever since. I am certain those were her Niphetos roses on the font to-day—I heard she had asked if she might send some flowers for the christening."

"That was very pretty of her," Heather said, "and though your connexion with her did not exactly come out of the Guild, it certainly bears out what you were saying about unexpected links. Now I'll tell you what has surprised me about our expansion. I could never have imagined that it would add so much to the interest of our own gardens. There seems so much more point in raising seedlings,

and dividing plants and striking cuttings, when you know that somebody will be sure to want any that you have to spare, and the machinery is all ready to get them disposed of."

"I believe you there, my dear Heather," quoth Violet merrily. "To judge from the number we send on, you and the Elderly Lady must spend your whole time striking cuttings!"

"I do nothing of the sort," Heather began indignantly; but as the others laughed, she broke down into saying, "Well, it's not much trouble, and the garden is all the better for my finding out how much it will hold. But I want to know how the Underwoods are getting on, Violet?"

"I was just going to ask the same thing," said Daisy.

"My dear Sisters," began Violet impressively, "it's the strangest thing in the world, Mr. Underwood is ever so much better, and his wife says the Guild has done it all!"

"I suppose his mind was diverted a little from his troubles, and that relieved the nerves," said Rosemary.

"No doubt that was so, but the doctor told me that the great help had been in making him willing to go out in his chair, whenever the weather was possible. Of course, he had had no object in going out before, and it wearied and bored him, but

now, what with the clearing, and planting, and planning, and measuring, and settling the groups, he was always wanting to go out for short spells, to see what was doing, and it seems to have made all the difference. The doctors also seem to have agreed that it would be better for him if he could attempt to walk a little, but it was not to be urged while he still shrank from it. However, when he began to get a little stronger, and spent most of every decent day in the new shelter, he used to want to look closely at this and that, and somehow found that he could walk a few steps, and a good deal of power has come back, so that he moves fairly well on level ground, which is more than was ever expected."

"Just think of the poor wife!" said Daisy softly; "I hope it will go on!"

"Yes, there seems every reason to think that it will," said Violet. "The garden is getting really charming now, and he is more and more interested in it, and plans wonderful combinations, but he used to be continually brought up short by the extreme untrustworthiness of catalogues in all matters of colour. When the boys were home for the holidays, they were always tearing over on bicycles, and catching me in the garden, to say, 'Oh, if you please, dad wants to know if *Iris Stylosa* is really sky-blue, as the books say? and whether *Anemone*

Fulgens really blazes ? ' Then I would say, ' Tell him the iris isn't the least blue, but perfectly pure lilac, and the anemone blazes like a bonfire ! ' ' Thanks, awfully,' and they would be off. It *was* quaint ! "

" How did he manage when the boys were away ? " Rosemary asked.

" Oh, then he sent me post cards, till at last we both got the Colour Chart of the Horticultural Society, which is an immense help."

" Ah," said Heather, " I've explained to my family that if they want any peace, they had better combine, and give me that invaluable chart for my next birthday present, for life will shortly become unbearable without it. I should think Mr. Underwood, being an artist would appreciate it most fully."

" He certainly does," said Violet, " and I don't know whether it is the result of artistic training or not, but I've noticed that he cares more for the whole of a plant than almost anybody I know. It isn't only the flower or the leaf, but the way the plant comes up, and grows, and stands which interests him, and so every common little weed is a pleasure."

" Why, that's just like the old Dutch painters," said Rosemary. " Don't you remember, Heather, when we were in Bruges, how delighted we were to find the same plants on the banks of the canals that

we had been looking at in the pictures in the Museum ? ”

“ To be sure I do,” answered Heather, “ especially in the great Baptism, Gerard David, wasn’t it ? and the little Belgian weeds growing quite naturally on the banks of the Jordan.”

“ Mr. Underwood would be pleased to hear you say that,” said Violet. “ Not long ago, when I was over there, he got out his beautiful large photograph of the ‘ Adoration of the Spotless Lamb ’ to show me what he calls ‘ the immortal lily of the valley ’ in the foreground, saying as we looked at it, ‘ Now whether those old fellows actually gardened or not, they knew all a plant does, from start to finish.’ ”

“ How curiously all sorts of things seem to correspond with each other,” said Daisy reflectively. “ Now the other day, Dick’s brother sent him from Japan several of the drawing books which the children use, and it was so interesting to see just that very thing, the way they were taught to draw the main lines of the whole tree or plant, before they tried any details.”

“ Do you know, children dear,” said Rosemary, “ this talk has thrown a light on a thing which has often puzzled me about a friend of mine, with whom I have a good many garden interests in common, and yet I have always dimly felt that she was not a possible Guild Member. She is an energetic gar-

dener in her way, greatly interested in the success of her plants, and works very hard over them, though I am not quite sure that she would not be as well pleased if somebody else did the work. However, she thoroughly appreciates the beauty of her flowers, and I must add, she is extremely generous with them, yet I could not honestly call her a *garden lover*. Now I begin to think, that part of what I miss in her is the lack of the very thing Violet was speaking of, the interest in the whole plant, not only the flower and what is connected with that. I know that we have discussed this want before, but I had thought of it more as a consequence, coming from the flowering having been made too exclusively important, than as a defect in itself."

"If you try to get to the bottom of it," Violet spoke slowly and thoughtfully, "isn't the caring for the whole plant really much the same as what you once said, Heather, about watching the development of the hidden life?"

Heather nodded. "Yes, but I think now that I was mistaken in taking for granted that everybody who gardened at all had that feeling in the back of their minds. There may be plenty of people like Rosemary's friend, who have a real interest in cultivating their flowers and using them for all sorts of quite legitimate purposes, who don't go any further, and that is only saying that people are all very

different. Still the love of a *garden* seems to me to involve something more than this, though one may never want to put it into words, and I imagine that a real artist would always feel the interest of the hidden life more than any one else."

"I was just thinking," said Daisy, "that most of the good gardeners I know of are more or less artists. I know Rosemary calls herself an unartistic person, but I don't think it is true!"

"My dear Daisy," protested the President, "you know I couldn't do a scrap of artistic work to save my life! Don't be so disrespectful to the Bud's godmother as to contradict her statements."

"That's neither here nor there," said Violet calmly. "You have as good an eye both for form and colour as anybody need want, and that's the beginning of everything."

"Yes, but only the beginning," Rosemary answered. "Still, if you mean that watching and petting one's garden for a good many years does of necessity educate one to a certain extent, am not prepared to dispute it. And certainly it adds a great pleasure to life."

"To go back to the last remark but a good many," said Heather, "why don't we have Mr. Underwood in the Guild, Violet?"

"Because he won't come in just yet. He says, which of course is stuff, that he has neither garden-

ing knowledge nor experience enough, and that, for the present, he is to be regarded as my Chela ! ”

“ Then are you a Lama, or a Mahatma, or what ? ” Daisy bubbled with laughter.

“ Both, for aught I know,” Violet replied composedly, “ and probably an Afreet into the bargain ! ”

“ Mr. Underwood’s standard is too exalted,” said Rosemary when she had recovered from the vision of Violet as a Lama, “ I doubt that many of our Members could reach to it. Still, I do think that most of our Guild people have been wonderfully satisfactory, both friendly and pleasant, and I quite agree with Heather that it does add a great interest to our own gardening to feel that there are all these others, going on in our quiet sort of way, and that there is a sympathy between us. And however much the Guild may grow, I like to think that there must still be many, very many Garden Lovers who will never know anything about us, but to whom, all the same, we shall be linked by an invisible bond of union, in that, in our small way, we are all trying to make our corners of the world a little brighter than we found them.”

LET US CULTIVATE OUR GARDEN.

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